

Chapter 3

Resident Focus Group Results

QUALITY-OF-LIFE STUDY OF THE 7th AVENUE AND 7th STREET REVERSE LANES

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CHAPTER 3: RESIDENT FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

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Focus Group Overview

Two focus groups of residents living within the study area were held on one night in February 2008. Unlike the other focus group invitees, these were not survey recipients, although they live within the same study area as the residents of the survey sample. The participants were contacted from the ASU Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) research participant database. In order to represent the population of the study area, a pre-screening procedure was used to choose focus group participants. An attempt was made to have the participants fit the following three criteria: 1. Distance they live from 7th Avenue or 7th Street should be split evenly between less than ¼ miles and greater than ¼ miles; 2. the group should be 25% Hispanic; and 3. roughly 1/6 should live in attached housing units (apartments or condos). In the first group, of fourteen residents who were scheduled for the first focus group, 13 actually took part. For the second focus group, of fourteen that were scheduled, 12 participated.

The resident focus groups followed a format similar to the other focus groups in the study. Each discussion lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The perspectives and opinions of each of the participants regarding the costs and benefits of the reverse lanes were discussed and then various solutions were discussed. The discussion was transcribed and analyzed using both pseudo-quantitative and qualitative methods. Using a qualitative analysis software package called Xsight¹, each statement from the discussions was classified into one or several topic areas enabling the comparison of topic emphasis from group to group. In the end, there were 39 topic areas discussed among all of the focus groups. This chapter reviews the range of topics discussed in the resident focus groups, and tries to tease out the most important topics discussed. We then present quotations from the discussions which exemplify these key themes. Detailed transcripts are provided at the end of the chapter.

Range of Topics Discussed

Statements from the discussions were classified into a total of 39 “topics” and tallied for their significance. The following table is set in order from greatest to least commonly discussed topic. Residents discussed the greatest variety of concerns of all the focus group samples, having discussed 31 of the 39 possible topics.

Table 3-1 Focus Group Topical Summary: Residents’ Results Highlighted

Discussion Topics	Res Cnt	Res %	Bus Cnt	Bus %	Ped Cnt	Ped %	Drv Cnt	Drv %	Total Cnt	Total %
Afraid/difficulty turning left or right	23	11%	11	6%	3	2%	4	5%	39.5	7%
RL rules are confusing to some drivers	23	11%	9	5%	13	8%	11	15%	49.5	9%
Congestion is apparent along RL	16	8%	12	6%	8	5%	9	12%	41	7%
Traffic cutting through neighborhoods	14	7%	14	7%	2	1%	0	0%	29	5%
Speeding on Street	12	6%	25	13%	4	3%	0	0%	39	7%
Positive benefits of RL	10	5%	3	2%	7	5%	4	5%	20.5	4%

¹ See http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_xsight.aspx for more information about Xsight.

are worth keeping it										
RL's create better traffic flow/ reducing congestion	10	5%	3	2%	5	3%	6	8%	21.5	4%
Speeding in neighborhoods	9	4%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	10	2%
More enforcement is needed	8	4%	7	4%	6	4%	6	8%	24	4%
More accidents in lieu of RL	8	4%	7	4%	1	1%	1	1%	16.5	3%
Start/Ending time confusion	8	4%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	9	2%
Traffic lights and LH turns between blocks helps	8	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	1%
Road-rage	7	3%	2	1%	8	5%	2	3%	15	3%
RL's are Dangerous	5	2%	10	5%	4	3%	4	5%	21	4%
Afraid/avoid using the RL	5	2%	5	3%	0	0%	10	14%	20	4%
Shortens travel times	5	2%	0	0%	1	1%	2	3%	7.5	1%
Honking	4	2%	5	3%	3	2%	0	0%	10.5	2%
Illegal Lefts	4	2%	4	2%	4	3%	3	4%	13	2%
Dangerous to cross mid-block	4	2%	3	2%	11	7%	0	0%	12.5	2%
Light Rail/Construction Impact	4	2%	1	1%	7	5%	4	5%	12.5	2%
Pollution issues	4	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Prefers least expensive alternatives	4	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Dangerous environment for pedestrians	3	1%	8	4%	24	16%	0	0%	23	4%
Pedestrian Deaths/Accidents	3	1%	4	2%	7	5%	0	0%	10.5	2%
Anxiety and Stress	2	1%	5	3%	3	2%	0	0%	8.5	2%
RL is used incorrectly	2	1%	3	2%	0	0%	3	4%	8	1%
Cut-thru parking lots	2	1%	2	1%	1	1%	0	0%	4.5	1%
Tailgating	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Necessity in lieu of freeways	1	0.5%	6	3%	1	1%	0	0%	7.5	1%
Weaving in-and-out of lanes	1	0.5%	1	1%	0	0%	2	3%	4	1%
Red light running	1	0.5%	0	0%	6	4%	0	0%	4	1%
Decreases number of customers	0	0%	13	7%	0	0%	0	0%	13	2%
Desire for more Pedestrian Amenities and Urban Lifestyle	0	0%	10	5%	13	8%	0	0%	16.5	3%
Hard to access businesses	0	0%	7	4%	0	0%	0	0%	7	1%
Turning out of businesses	0	0%	7	4%	0	0%	0	0%	7	1%
Customers complain about the RL or traffic	0	0%	5	3%	0	0%	0	0%	5	1%
Delivery impacts	0	0%	4	2%	3	2%	0	0%	5.5	1%
Congestion due to busses	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	2	3%	3	1%
J-walking	0	0%	0	0%	5	3%	0	0%	2.5	0%
Total	212	100%	199	100%	154	100%	73	100%	561	100%

Emphasized Topics

The two most commonly recurring discussion topics were concerning both the residents' fear or difficulty in turning left or right along the reverse lane routes and the confusing nature of the reverse lane rules. These issues were each raised 23 times, which represents an 11% share (or 22% combined) of all the topics mentioned during the process of the focus groups. Other major issues include increased traffic congestion along the reverse lanes (16 counts, 8% share), neighborhood cut-through traffic issues (14 counts, or 7% share), and speeding along 7th Street or 7th Avenue (12 counts, 7%). The next two most common topics include the reverse lanes' positive impacts, including the idea that the benefits of the lanes outweigh the negative impacts, and the more specific opinion that the reverse lanes reduce congestion and improve traffic flow. Both of these topics were raised 10 times each, for a 5% share of all comments mentioned (10% combined)

Other common themes relate to the residents' perception of the negative traffic impacts, such as the problem with speeding on the neighborhood streets, a lack of enforcement of traffic rules, more traffic accidents due to the reverse lanes and a specific reference to the confusion in knowing the start and ending times of the reverse lane sessions (8-9 counts, 4% share each).

These findings show that the majority of residents indicate negative feelings toward the reverse lanes in their current state. Yet, from the actual focus groups discussions, it was evident that a large percentage of the participants are in favor of keeping the reverse lanes. Those favoring the lanes acknowledged the challenges, but reiterated that as daily drivers in the vicinity who are experienced with the reverse lanes, it only takes paying closer attention to the reverse lane hours and immediate traffic conditions to improve safety. Their complaints are largely against careless drivers or those ignorant of the speed limit or reverse lane guidelines. Many residents believe that if the reverse lanes were removed, it would result in substantially more traffic problems.

Another finding from the resident focus group discussions is that when the reverse lanes are in effect, it poses more challenges for local traffic than for commuters from outside of Central Phoenix. Some residents choose to avoid the reverse lanes' operating hours when running short errands or driving short distances, which results in the fact that many residents do not directly experience the reverse lanes for long segments of time. It also means that for local residents, travel time to local destinations is greatly increased. Many described going miles out of their way to make rights and legal lefts to either get around at all, or because they want to avoid 7th Avenue or 7th Street.

That said, other residents who work at nearby employment centers like to use the reverse lane to get to work, and find alternate routes when traffic congestions mounts. In addition, regardless of the preference for keeping or removing the reverse lanes, neighborhood cut through traffic was a major concern for residents. There were many stories about homeowners groups installing traffic calming devices on neighborhood streets. Other homeowners made failed attempts to do so, as they encounter legal or procedural hurdles to their installation (the needs for certain percentages of neighbors

to approve within certain distanced from the traffic calming device, for example). Furthermore, general concern for the safety of children near public schools was a common theme among residents.

Some residents seemed to be in favor of removing the reverse lane and returning it to a standard two-way left hand turn lane, but this was balanced with those who want adamantly to keep it. The broadest majority would support other alternatives, such as installing additional signage or lighting that more clearly indicates to drivers how and when to use the reverse lanes. Many would also like to see additional traffic calming devices and pedestrian amenities both along the reverse lanes and in the neighborhoods.

Specific References

Below is a sample of quotations offered during the resident focus groups that provide insights into the topics discussed. The quotations may include minor editing to remove original names or to improve readability and punctuation.

1. Illegal Left/Misuse: “I don’t think all the people are up on what the reverse lanes are, because I’ve watched some of these people who are sitting there – they’re coming north at night and trying to make a left hand turn to get over to the freeway, and there are all these people who are waiving to them. I think you know what I’m talking about.”
2. Difficulty/afraid of turning: “[Those using the reverse lane] know they can’t make a left hand turn at the light, so they go to the next Street or location where it is legal to make their left hand turn. And everybody gets mad at them, and why everyone has to honk their horn I don’t know. They have every right as long as it’s not at a light. But [other drivers] don’t want to wait for these people who turn left into the side streets. So they avoid that center lane.”
3. Difficulty turning for locals: “I still don’t like the streets the way they are. I made a mistake one day at a dentist’s office at Thomas and 5th Avenue. And I got out to 7th Avenue at a regular reverse lane time. I made a reverse lane turn and wanted to go to Bethany and the freeway. I couldn’t make a left hand turn, because everyone was coming and going south bound in the morning. So I went to Bethany, went to Central Avenue, went back to Missouri, and then I went down to 19th Avenue and back to 5th Avenue. It added about 2 miles to my drive time. I’ll tell you one thing. I never make a mistake twice. I did once and thought I could use the street during those times.”
4. Lack of enforcement: “They are flying. We need patrol officers out there monitoring them. And they can catch a lot of them between Glendale Avenue and just south of Dunlap because that is pretty scary.”
5. Congestion: “One of the reasons I was late today was because the reverse lane impedes traffic going south. It’s because all of the people are coming out of the office buildings from Park Central and all that area and taking both side streets and are trying to make a left hand turn to go north and get on 7th Street and get on that segue (reverse lane). So, if we’re going south and we are trying to let

them in, you know... and then before you know it we got all this back-up. Right now it's terrible, clear down to McDowell.

6. Pedestrian Dangers: "It's also a problem for pedestrians who take the bus, because there are crosswalks all up and down 7th Avenue and 7th Street that don't have designated stop lights. Really, so it's mandatory that people stop for you; but that middle lane is like the only safety you usually have. If you're crossing and you're in a hurry, you have to stop and wait for these people (drivers) to decide to stop for you. And when that lane's going with people at 55+ [MPH], you've got nothing, so you are sitting there for 5 minutes just waiting, or you have to go to a major light. You don't even get time to cross it."
7. Reverse lanes help traffic flow: "... but driving is already an inconvenience. The reverse lanes are not that different than regular streets. It helps, because at least one time of day it's easy to get where you need, instead of always being hard."
8. Reverse lanes help traffic flow: "I like it. It helps out when everybody in Phoenix is pretty much moving to the outskirts of town. It helps those who live by Deer Valley, who don't have many ways to get into town. I think it does help."
9. Adjusting for the lanes is minor issue: "You can add an extra 3 minutes [in the trip time planning] for rush hour and everything else, but you can't add an extra 3 minutes for this stuff. They already know the reverse lane is there and add an extra 5 minutes."
10. Keep the lanes: "I've used it and have no problems. If you want to cut traffic down, don't let people come here. In LA and NY, it's much worse. That's the price you pay for growth. The weather helps a lot. Maybe the light rail will take care of it – hopefully."
11. Just accommodate for the lane: "If the left-turn is a problem, there's a way to avoid it. Stay away from the left lane. You anticipate it. You don't go into the left lane unless you want to make a left hand turn- even during the peak hours?"
12. Driving will be inconvenient regardless: "I think that with how fast Phoenix is growing, I don't think it matters which way you are going. There are still going to be a lot of people on the road going straight, turning right, going north, going south and everyone's going to their own place on their own schedule. So technically, just driving is an inconvenience to everyone."
13. Keep the reverse lane: "It should stay the way it is. Sometimes it's not a bad thing. I try to go to work after the reverse lanes are done. I'll come home later too. Because no left hand turns limits me. It's easier to get to work. I'm for the lanes because they help traffic in general, but my short distance it doesn't help me. Not being able to make the turns limits me. I'm for them, I think they help, but I try to avoid them. I only have a short distance to worry about. Coming home between 4-6 congestion coming out of Phoenix is horrible, but it would be the same whether it's 2 lanes or 3 lanes."
14. Speeding in neighborhoods: "I've seen people turn at the roundabouts going almost 35 mph, almost tipping their trucks. I don't think anything will help. Phoenix is just getting bigger and bigger."

15. Misuse: “I’ve seen people drive into oncoming traffic to make left hand turns. Like, they’re in the center lane, and they’ll pull into the oncoming traffic – you know – when there’s no cars coming of course. You do it to avoid backing people up. I’ve even seen someone do that to get around someone in the center lane. I’ve seen the worst driving in that center lane.”
16. Dangerous: “I’d remove it. I say that because as a driver I like to have an invisible buffer. There is no buffer. Any car can cross at any time. There is something about having that middle lane free, so that you don’t have to worry about having someone zipping by and then moving into your lane. It just makes me really nervous as a driver to drive down the street and having somebody within inches. It’s greater impact than when you’re going in the same direction.”
17. Speeding in neighborhoods: “At the north-south street right there feeding into Rose Lane, they blast down that street. It’s ridiculous. It’s not even that long of a street or a thru-street. There’s kids, and people don’t go slow. They just barrel through, and there are the kids nearby.” Another in response: “It’s the same for our neighborhood. The east-west feeder for us is Griswold, and there’s just too many children there. And they don’t care - people drive it as like it were a freeway.”
18. Pollution: “It’s just bumper to bumper in the morning and afternoon. Taking that lane isn’t going to serve to clear that up, but we’re choking on others’ pollution.”

Comparison with other Focus Group Samples

The topics that were raised by residents, but not significantly among all the other sample groups, include the following: speeding in the neighborhoods, the need for additional traffic lights and turning arrows between blocks, the confusion with start and ending times, and pollution impacts. It is understandable that some of these categories are raised by residents, given their perspectives on local traffic concerns, such as traffic signal timing, pedestrian safety issues, and local air quality.

Another finding is that the most common topics discussed by residents were also discussed by the other focus group samples, although the frequency was different. For example the issue regarding the challenges drivers face when turning left or right was also a fairly common problem for drivers and businesses, but understandably not by the pedestrians. The confusing nature of the lanes and congestion along the reverse lane routes was also a common problem across all the sample groups. Cutting through neighborhoods and speeding along 7th Street and 7th Avenue was also mentioned by all the sample groups, except for drivers. It is also interesting to note that at least a small number of references were made by all the focus group samples regarding the positive impacts of the reverse lanes and the idea that the reverse lanes improve flow. The businesses, however, mentioned this idea the least among the groups.

Conclusions

Broadly, all residents find there are problems with the reverse lanes as they are operated now – namely: speeding, road rage, confusing rules, neighborhood cut-through traffic, and a perceived safety risk. Those in support of the lanes and that use

them regularly feel there are significant problems with the confusing lack of left-turn opportunities and what they perceive as safety issues. Some are strongly opposed to them and want the lanes returned to normal left-turn operations. Few strongly support their continuation, albeit with an improvement in signaling and enforcement. In total, we could find no residents wanting to leave the lanes as-is. The basic sentiment was – make them safer, or return them to normal operation. Even those coming to the discussions with no prior complaints (most of them) reveal feelings of anxiety and confusion about using the lanes, and a frustration with the lack of local accessibility resulting from the left-turn limitations.

Overall, almost all residents were displeased with the lanes and want to make them safer and their rules more clear to drivers, but not passionate either way about keeping or returning them to normal. A passionate minority is interested in their return to normal operation, and an even smaller and less passionate minority wants to see them remain the way they are.

Focus Group Transcripts

Two focus groups were held for residents. The transcripts for both of these discussions are provided below.

Focus Group Minutes

ASU Traffic Study 7:00 PM February 11, 2008 Residents

Attendance:

9 Participants

Team: Aaron Golub, DJ, Bharath, Indro, Pranav

Format to meeting:

Introduce, find-out cross-streets

Ground Rules

Ask Questions, begin discussion

Are you familiar with the RL's?

Can we groan?

Then Aaron explains the lanes.

Who drives in central phoenix?

All 9

Who doesn't drive?

None

Take transit (bus)?

No.

- about 5 months ago

Anyone walk to get to places?

- occasionally

- occasionally

- for exercise

Who here uses the RL lanes, regularly?

All but 4

- Avoids

- Avoids

- Avoid them

- Avoids

In favor of lanes:

1

No opinion:

2

Doesn't like:

1- causes road rage

2

3

4

Pros of the R lanes: From those in favor

- I think it would slow traffic down more if you removed it. I helps traffic move faster.

Does it save you time?

- If I'm coming into Phoenix my ride is going north, so I only have to go on it for a very short time. Coming into downtown, it does go faster.

against – I'm used to coming into downtown in the morning during rush hour. I don't think it saves me time, in fact I think it slows me down because people are in that lane trying to turn l. so it slows the rest of the people. I feel it does not save me time.)

- benefits outweigh the negative. I believe it Helps traffic. It's hard to make LH turns. That impedes traffic and causes a lot of red light running. So having these lanes helps.

- It does just what it's designed to do, mitigate congestion. I think it saves time. I intentionally use it to go downtown from Missouri for that very reason.

Those against the r. lanes - problems:

- I believe it saves time, because the people who are trying to turn left from that lane, everyone else is backed up so they have to scoot over to a free lane. So I believe it doesn't save that much more time by having it. It backs up because of LH Turns. It doesn't save that much more time by having it. If you average it out, you lose time (in favor – I disagree, because if you slow it to a 2-way lane, then that would slow down more than the current 1-way LH turns)

(in favor – If the left-turn is a problem, there's a way to avoid it. Stay away from the left lane. You anticipate it. You don't go into the left lane unless you want to make a lh turn-even during the peak hours? Yes. I always anticipate it when I go left. I don't want stay away from that lane knowing I don't have to turn left and slow me up. So I go into another lane and just keep going. If the reverse lane was not there, then the other 2 lanes would be a lot more crowded. So it doesn't speed up in that lane for you. The times that I do want to use it is for when I turn left.)

- The lack of education and lack of knowledge of how to use it and when to use it leads to people not using it right. Frankly, every time I use it I see someone misusing it. Either turning L. at the light, coming in the opposite direction.

2 others agree.

- makes a comment in support of it.

People don't pay attention in the evening when it ended. I'm surprised there aren't more accidents

- I disagree. I've My husband and I coming here tonight is a perfect example. It was 626, and someone was coming was coming down, and clearly people were not paying

attention to when that time ended. Anybody who is coming down and it would be past sunset; Any could get into a head on collision just like that. I'm surprised there

Another - That's what I've been telling you, I'd been in that lane at 356 -356 to turn, because someone is trying to get through and people are honking at me, and whose clock is right?

- There are people who set their clocks 15 minutes fast – who knows what time it actually is?

- adds pollution. Yes I know it's pretty clogged, but just add a 3rd lane. So now you've got 3 lanes going So. And three lanes coming North. It's just bumper to bumper am and pm. Taking that lane isn't going to serve to clear that up, but we're choking on others' pollution.

Does the RL make it hard to make LH turns? Drivers a drawback on ability to make lh turns.

- yes because when you turn into a particular business, you have to go out of your way and hopefully you kind of hold your breath and think, "Can I make it?"

- but you can between lights.

- You can, but when you have people behind you who are really impatient.

- They don't know and they don't care, You're right about that. Because I've sat there and waited and people honk and flip me off. What can you do about it? But you have to turn. So I wait. It does take a big **skin** to use it to turn left.

- I use it probably 6-7 different times of the day, so I'm using it at all different times. It is ignorance, not knowing it's there, not knowing how to use it properly.

Other: there are just 2 in the valley, right?

Aaron: Do you sense any impacts/cut-thru traffic in the neighborhoods?

- That's why we see the radar, police, and speed bumps. That's where those short cuts are. You have it down all the side streets you can. Down Colter and all the side streets you can.

- some people charge thru.

- on 11th Ave. I see it all the time. We just put speed bumps in – our neighborhood association. I noticed that just East of 7th Av. in the same area just So. of Missouri they don't allow turns any time, except emergency vehicles, and I'm sure that was in response to cut-throughs.

- they just put 3 speed bumps in our neigh. On Rose Lane because of the cut-through traffic which leads to Madison Resident School, so there's a lot of kids in that area. You can tell who cuts through because they're ticked and they're just flooring it and trying to get off of 7th and get through to the other side, which is very dangerous.

- The N-S street right there feeding into rose lane. They blast down that street. It's ridiculous. It's not even that long of a street or a thru-street. There's kids. and people don't go slow. They just barrel through, and there are the kids nearby.
 - It's the same for our neighborhood on the E-W feeder for us is Griswold and there's just too many children there. And they don't care - people drive it as like it were a freeway.
 - It's just hard to go to the grocery stores and things like that. If say you're at 11th Ave. and Fry's is at 10th Avenue, you have to go all the way to 7th Ave., make a left, and make another left. It's kind of a hassle.
- 3 people said (it's the light rail)

- It urges people to speed, because they get impatient. They don't want to wait.

What would you do if you could change something about these lanes?

- I think what's needed is education. I moved here 10 hrs ago from Calif. I can't recall a time when I read in the paper when I read about how to use it, and I read the paper pretty much every day. When I moved to C. Phoenix from Gilbert. I wouldn't use it. I would just make right turns to get where I had to go, which took me longer and I hated it. But then I finally figured out o.k. I know how to use it; I'll use it when I have to. But I haven't seen any education on it, how to use it and when you should, can you turn left, should you not. Those types of things. The signs are inadequate.

- The same thing. Education, but also signage. The times I've noticed the most accidents are the cross-over times. 4, 6 or whatever. If there could be some sort of signal – like red-light, green light, whatever, to help people get on the same page, could avoid accidents and synchronize the lane, if it were to continue it. When all the infill, it's just getting more congested.

- Maybe one clock (atomic clock) every couple miles or so like the atomic clock. to help people see the time that it is starting and ending – so there's no discrepancy.

- I think that a combination of both education and notification of the signals on the street itself. At one time there was a flashing signal. I probably didn't recognize it. If you had a caution light, maybe red and green – especially at the intersections so that you know when it's not open. So you're not waiting for someone to turn when they're not supposed to.

- signal is good.

- I think both education and a signal and maybe if they had a clock up there. I just got my license about 5 months ago – I didn't get any education on it. I don't know about it so that's why I avoid it. But I'd like to. I have used the lane wrong (I've used it to get to work on time).

- I've used it and have no problems. If you want to cut traffic down, don't let people come here. In LA and NY it's much worse. That's the price you pay for growth. The weather helps a lot. Maybe the light rail will take care of it – hopefully.

– When were they instituted? (A – around 1980) Any statistics and comparisons on the number of accidents (yes, right now, by the City. The city will come of the results). I'm a native of Arizona, I'm going to go pretty radical and say get rid of them.

– I think education and adding signals will help. People don't see the signs always and don't know when to use them or in making turns. Something more than just a passive sign. Do they give out tickets because of people using it?

Someone else - Only when the police are around.

– Because I never see it.

– When they're there they give out tickets. Only when they're there (others laugh)

– I clearly see people abusing it, by speeding and going when they're not supposed to.

– I'll just piggy back on what they're saying. I think that when you have the signs, when you have somebody who is not from here and not used to the street and looking for something on these streets, there is not way they can read the three sentences on the signs and understand what is going on. I told you before, I went o U of A and on Grant where I went to school there were clear signs that said "do not use" that flashed at you. And on the other side of the same signs, there was a big green circle that said "ok to use." So it's a combination of the Clock idea and signal idea where it told you even if you didn't read the sign you could see there's a big flashing x that says I shouldn't be in this lane. Going one step further I think Education could go a long way. Driver's education... if there were something in the driver's manual that said something about it when people go bad to renew their license. Maybe the newspaper or newscasts. Likes other ideas.

– I'd remove it. I say that because as a driver I like to have an invisible buffer. There is no buffer. Any car can cross at any time. There is something about having that middle lane free, so that you don't have to worry about having someone zipping by and then moving into your lane. It just makes me really nervous as a driver to drive down the street and having somebody within inches. It's greater impact than when you're going in the same direction. There's something about that car right there, not a very comfortable feeling.

– It's more dangerous. I grew up in a rural areas with 2 lane traffic and ditches and being accustomed here. When I first moved here it makes me wonder with those 2 lanes and no where to go – you have no options. It's not an ideal solution, but with education and signage. If it's going to stay. You don't know where to go. Ideally everyone would telecommute and take bus and light rail.

– anyone else think if we removed the lanes?

– I think it would be idea if we didn't need them. I'm not sure how it would look if we took it way, but we might really have road rage. People don't like to have things taken away from them.

Aaron: What about the arguments against the lanes. Are there other solutions that take into account all the problems? Are some of these people's complaints taken into account? Silence.

If you could do traffic calming in the neighborhoods help with the speeding and problems? Should more neighborhoods have that?

Some neighborhoods have the no lh turns during the same times. You see that in some areas as well.

- I'm just thinking there might be a possibility to make 7th Street one-way, It's safe, but it doesn't necessarily help with pollution. my neigh. Doesn't have that. It would help. It would be nice to make 7th St. one way in the morning. But then you have it like a freeway. As is it doesn't help with pollution.

- That's 6 hours where the majority of the businesses aren't going to get any lh turns. And that's where the majority of our businesses are. Those are along a central corridor - high traffic areas. That is where the businesses want to be for that very reason. 7th St. and 7th Ave. like the traffic. 3 hours in the am, 3 in the afternoon; that's 6 hours in a day.

- You would be sacrificing the businesses for safety, but I happen to be on the side of safety.

Aaron - Some calming already.

I think people speed in the neighborhoods is increasing as we speak because there are people who speed just because they do. There are wide streets in the neigh. that are not **blind** and people go through there. It doesn't matter with kids or adults, whoever has a driver's license. When those bumps go in, you don't zip over them, you zip in between them. Or you slow down at the bumps and go ahead. They're there, or, you go around. They're there because just because we're not following the rules. So, the city has to spend our money to put them in, and we still don't follow the rules. It's because of society as a whole. We don't want to be impeded. We get in that car or truck and we think we have all the rights in the world. That's just not really the right attitude. I think that's probably encompassing this whole thing; because the people aren't doing the right thing, all of us have to suffer. That's just the way it is.

- I forget that driving is a privilege and not a right.

- I'm not sure you don't increase cut-throughs by removing the lanes. I think you slow down traffic even further, and people are just finding ways around the traffic, instead of looking for ways to turn left. I think you just end one problem and create another.

Another; Try using 7th St. and 7th Ave. as a cut through, and you'll find it's a challenge. And if it were 1-way, it would be worse.

- To my understanding Traffic calming and with Speed bumps that the neighborhoods have to agree on that street. some neighbors might agree and some might not agree for it, because it does slow them down.

-In out neighborhood it has to be 100% if you were within 200 feet of the proposed bump. And it was something like 75% if you were on the street. We had 1 less bump because one neighbor didn't want it.

- they put them in our neigh. Without our consent.
- Our HOA funded them. IT depends on who is doing it.

More Traffic lights?

Increasing enforcement:

- Photo radar is more common all over the valley, whether you're in Phoenix, Tempe, or Scottsdale. That is what it is going to eventually take. More traffic lights and more photo enforcement.

- I'll be you could do that for people that are going the wrong way on the one-way.
- That's the way it's being policed now. That might happen first. It's a big expense anyway.

Aaron red X and green arrow:

Like Tucson.

Adapt old signs to be more active, adding red beacons showing when its in force:

- it's nice idea but some are color blind. With that maybe they'll focus on the red light, but they won't read the sign. They'll see that red flashing light and think it's a camera.
- people won't read the sign, will focus on the red, don't have education for it and will be more confused.

-less desirable than the red and green arrows

A – another issue is to change the time of day or the length, possibly morning only or afternoon only, or one-way, etc. Or how long the lane is. Do any of you see more benefit in the morning or afternoon only?

- I think the issue is flow. I don't think the issue won't be solved by timing
- There will still be the offenders by those who don't know how to use it. I don't think changing the times or limiting the hours is going to change that pattern.

- I think you'll create additional problems for those that do know.

- keep it should stay the way it is. Sometimes it's not a bad thing. I try to go to work after the reverse lanes are done. I'll come home later too. Because no LH turns limits me. It's easier to get to work. I'm for the lanes because they help traffic in general, but my short distance it doesn't help me. Not being able to make the turns limits me. I'm for them, I think they help, but I try to avoid them. I only have a short distance to worry about. Coming home between 4-6 Congestion coming out of Phoenix is horrible, but it would be the same whether it's 2 lanes or 3 lanes. There's a lot of traffic coming home a day. I would use the side street to cut through. I use the lh lane. It scares me to use it even though it's legal to use it. I've seen a lot of accidents near the MacDonald's and

Taco Bell near Dunlap. At Dunlap especially. Everyone wants to get in there and everyone is on the lh side.

– (on am or pm) - You know my stance. No lanes at all for me. I'd like to see them all just go.

– I think the way it is fine. The timing as well.

–The timing is o.k. especially for those who go to work during rush hour traffic

– keep the time

– keep the time.

– just put speed bumps (joking)

– lower the speed bumps in the lane

– its 40 MPH and 35 mostly (clarifies) on both 7th Av. and 7th St.

Excessive Speeding?

Many agree

– We see it all the time.

– how about lowering the speed limit at night only during those hours, so you have a steady flow of traffic and people are going in and out of traffic at a slower pace. , so people don't have the issue of weaving, or if they weave, its at a slower speed.

MM – The speed limit at 35-40, if the lights are timed, and some are here in the West Valley, if you drive a lot, you'll know you cant speed up to 43-45, because you'll get stuck at a red light. If you use those streets all the time, you're going to get use to it. It's those few people who are speeding that cause havoc on all of our streets, not just these two.

A – Closing – we'll finish the study in June. Here's our information.

Will it be posted?

We post it, or give us a call.

Another conversation at the end.

– more LH turn arrows. When I go n. on 7th St. even at lunch time. As I turn L. on Bethany Home. I go past Bethany and through the CVS. There are as many as 15 cars waiting to turn. Some go thru. Bethany and the CVS to go home. I'm guilty about that once in a while.

– you can get a ticket for that. Going through an intersection to cut through a light.

– I'd do a u-turn after a right turn. In the am when I used to come home. RH turn on Bethany and then do a u-turn, and that's o.k.

– that's o.k.

- I don't know why some intersections don't have a lh turn. Arrow.
- Scottsdale has good traffic flow. A yr ago when I talked to the Phoenix. Transportation, it was stone walled. No positive feedback. They said this is how they will always do it. I asked for more LH turn arrows going it not he intersections
- people going E. on Bethany home, there is a LH turn arrow entering 7th St. but not on both sides.
- Id like to see that too. I'd like to see green arrows all over. (LH arrows)
- a simple solution.

A – other intersections?

- 7th St. and camelback. I was trying to turn L. onto 7th Street. People were supposed to be flowing north. Someone was trying to turn L. onto camelback and the camelback guy was trying to get onto 7th St. Even pedestrians were getting mad at cars honking when they couldn't move anyway.

Focus Group Minutes
ASU Traffic Study
5:30 PM February 11, 2008
Residents

In attendance:

Participants: 15

Team: Aaron Golub, DJ Stapley, Bharath Sollapuram, Indro Ray, Pranav

Who drives?

All but 3

Who doesn't drive?

1 – drives, but no near

2 – is retired. Stays in neighborhood. Drives, but not to downtown

3 – Doesn't own a car, doesn't really need one. Uses bike a lot.

Most of them do drive.

Drive during rush hour?

Most of them drive during rush hour.

All yes but 1

Doesn't drive during rush hour?

1 – yes. Avoids rush hour when he drives.

Take transit (bus) during rush hour?

1 – the one who doesn't own a car

1 – drives, but takes a bus to save money and time often.

Do you use the lane?

(Missed a few responses – see A's notes)

No – 5

Yes – 4

In favor of lanes: 7

No opinion: 2

Doesn't like: 5

Pros of the R lanes:

- It helps out with the Congestion of traffic.

5 – If it weren't there, it would take me a lot longer to get home during rush hour with that middle lane.

6 – I'm just afraid of that middle lane.

7 – I like it. It helps out when everybody in Phoenix is pretty much moving to the outskirts of town. It helps those who live by Deer Valley, who don't have many ways to get into town. I think it does help.

- pretty much so. It allows more cars on the road.
- It helps by stopping L. turns
- I think it's the least costly solution. Just keep painting the lines.
- Have you considered the comparison of accidents due to the reverse lanes?

A – What do you think?

– I've seen a few accidents. There are a lot of people who don't know how to use it. You spend a lot of money getting us used to it. I don't see what you're gaining by getting rid of it. One thing is traffic and another is speed. The farther you go, the faster they go.

A – your saying that moving it will cause more accidents?

- I'd like to know how many accidents it's causing right now. Because I don't see many tourists that are getting on that left-turn lane. Usually 20 people honk at them and they get out of the way pretty quick.

1 - When did they start the reverse lanes?

A – about 1980

1 - When did they build Piestewa Freeway? The 51?

A – 1990's?

1 - I moved there in 1971 and there wasn't a reverse lane or the freeways.

2 - Another person. Do you know if they implemented the reverse lanes because of the traffic?

A – no.

1 – I thought that they had the reverse lanes before they had the 51.

3 – they had the reverse lanes before then even though the 51. They used 7th St. and 7th Ave. as the actual inner-city main roads.

1 – I lived there in 1971 and the 51 hadn't opened up yet, and traffic got really backed up to my house. And my house sits between Glendale and northern in the morning. But when the city opened up the 51, it helped a lot.

Those against the r. lanes - problems:

Turn restrictions are bad and it makes people want to cut through the residential streets. You have to drive through the neighborhoods anyway.

I was in the reverse lane. And trying to get into 7th Av. and people cut through the neighborhoods. It's more hassle than it's worth.

It's only if you are not working in a place where there are more restrictions. Where I work, I can make a turn into the area where I work.

Another— I can't get in on a left hand turn.

But I live just north of that. See, I go down to Earl, and then back up. It's a small price to pay to getting there in 10 minutes. Depends on which street. Where I go to work near the park central mall, I just take extra RH turns. It takes more time, but it's worth it.

A: The problems with access vary depending on your point of destination. For instance, where I work at Park Central mall on 7th Avenue, there are 3 places where I can make a legal left-turn into the area where I work.

Another: I live just north of that.

You see, granted I go down to Earl, turn around and go back up, but it's a small price to pay for getting down there in 10 minutes.

Another who supports the lane – You can add an extra 3 minutes for rush hour and everything else, but you can't add an extra 3 minutes for this stuff. They already know the reverse lane is there and add an extra 5 minutes.

– I don't think all the people are up on what the reverse lanes are, because I've watched some of these people who are sitting there – they're coming north at night and trying to make a lh turn to get over to the freeway, and there are all these people who are waiving to them. I think you know what I'm talking about. These say "what's going on...duhhh..."

Another— But I think it's the same when we go to California and everything with their one-way streets, and we are like how are we supposed to make 4 reverse lane turns to get back onto the same road.

– I agree with you 100%. I'm just saying people don't know when the lane starts. Some people look at their watch.

– some people's watches are, I mean, 10 minutes off.

– (One who doesn't own a car because he can't afford it. He used to drive and own a car though. He takes the bus a lot) – It's also a problem for pedestrians who take the bus, because there are crosswalks all up and down 7th Av. and 7th Street that don't have designated stop lights. Really, so it's mandatory that people stop for you, but that middle lane is like the only safety you usually have. If you're crossing and you're in a hurry, you have to stop and wait for these people (drivers) to decide to stop for you. And when that lane's going with people at 55+, you've got nothing, so you are sitting there for 5 minutes just waiting, or you have to go to a major light. You don't even get

time to cross it. I mean, there are still people who are in rush hour and trying to go to work to don't have a vehicle, can't afford a vehicle, or whatever their situation may be.

Another - I'll bet there are a lot of accidents.

- I've had friends hit in that lane because of that.

Another still – There are maniacs driving in the lane.

Problems (cont.):

Cut-throughs (business and neighborhoods)

Impacts and problems add to travel time – people stopping for LH turns

Time question

No pedestrian refuge

Problems with making a left

Opposite direction

Light/other construction rail adds to traffic right now

Many avoid the center lane because of left-turners

Causes scary driving

Lack of enforcement

Traffic in neighborhood

A – So we have access as an issue – to the smaller streets it's hard.

Timing issues

can't make lefts.

Another– pedestrian problems.

Other comments:

A - One of the reasons I was late today was because it impedes traffic going south. Because all of the people are coming out of the office buildings from Park Central and all that area and taking both side streets and are trying to make a lh turn to go north and get on 7th Street and get on that segue. So, if we're going south and we are trying to let them in, you know... and then before you know it we got all this back-up. Right now it's terrible, clear down to McDowell. I think it's from all those people in Park Central and all those office buildings over there that are trying to take the side streets and trying to go north on 7th St. and we're going south and trying to let them in so they can go north and there we sit. It took me about 20 minutes to get to the Thomas light.

B – I think that's part of it. The other part is the light rail mess by Osborn going from central to 7th St. They're putting in a pipe. That was one-way both ways... and then 3rd Street is all messed up to whatever going south of Osborn. So that whole ¼ mile right there is like stopped for that whole block.

C - My building is on the west side of central between Thomas and Osborn. It took me 45 minutes to get from my office building to 7th Avenue and Osborn. Yes, 45 minutes just to get across Central, so you know, and that's, you know we have to take the side streets, because there isn't any other way to go with Central is closed right now.

A - Those people going north using that central lane, others [other drivers] avoid them, because they [those using the reverse lane] know they can't make a lh turn at the light, so they go to the next st. to make their lh turn. And everybody gets mad at them, and why everyone has to honk their horn I don't know, they have every right as long as it's not at a light. But they don't want to wait for these people who turn left into the side st. So they avoid that center lane. I was in the center lane and turned to get into my garage. And there wasn't even any traffic there. She just didn't bother to see that I was stopped to turn. (and ran into her?)

– I find it inconvenience going to work, because I couldn't turn l on 7th Av., so a lot of times I have to go into other businesses to turn around and get onto streets like Missouri or Indian School. You have this cut through problem as well.

- I've seen people drive into oncoming traffic to make left hand turns. Like they're in the center lane, and they'll pull into the oncoming traffic, you know when there's no cars coming of course. either to avoid backing people up or. I've even seen someone do that to get around someone in the center lane. I've seen the worst driving in that center lane.

Another - It's a scary lane to ride in though, because you've got cars inches away coming at the same speed you're going right past them.

Another – I think there's a lack of enforcement. It's a good system, but it's not enforced. Probably it's a budget issue. But you only need to do it once or twice a month.

Another– Also at 7th Av. and Glendale we have a fire station. And fire trucks go out 2-3 different directions. He takes the right of way every time he goes.

Possible improvements:

- Why don't you make all lanes in one direction? With 7th Street going one way and 7th Ave. going the other?

Other - They did that in Las Cruzes Mexico in the 1950's

A- Those that are neutral:

It has congestion. But it's the drivers who don't know what they're doing and go full speed in the wrong direction. And when it's peak hours and you can't take a lh turn anywhere, I'm not sure if one outdoes the other.

– Non driver. I don't drive anymore. Everywhere I go is right there within 7th Av. I go to 7th Av. and Glendale. And work at 16th St. and Camelback. I don't have insurance or car payments or anything. When I did drive and worked on McDowell, I used that lane. You just have to learn how to use it. You just have to be aware.

A- How does it affect you as a cyclist?

- It's difficult to cross. I can't trust people because I've been hit numerous times.

A – How about for those of you who live nearby – any impacts:

– Some will take Roanoke who are trying to get back on Thomas, the driveways get backed up.

- There was an accident The street that goes up to Glendale and 7th Av. Coming off 7th Av. down our street to 8th Street and back on Glendale. I mean heavy traffic – I mean, I've seen busses coming down there.

Other impacts –

- Anyone addressed the signs? They are really small. Sometimes you can't see them until you're almost upon it.

Another – I've seen red and green lights on top of a pole for each lane that tell you which lanes are open. It will tell you the time for the commute also so people know when to get into the diamond lane.

Overhead Lights to electronic green and red:

- We'd better not do that, because we want to pass the bond election. (Laughs)

It would make it More tourist-friendly, because everyone whose here from other places, there are less and less people born in Phoenix where their parents were also born here. They don't really know what the reverse lane is. People from Mesa and Tempe see a red x, they'll know to stop.

A – does it solve the issues?

It will cut back when people look at their watch and see 4:10 and other at a different time.

A – does this satisfy those against the RL?

- I still don't like the streets the way they are. I made a mistake one day at a dentist's office at Thomas and 5th Ave. And I got out to 7th Ave. at a regular reverse lane time. I made a reverse lane turn and wanted to go to Bethany and the freeway. I couldn't make a lh turn, because everyone was coming in going south bound in the morning. So I went to Bethany, went to central went back to Missouri, and then I went down to 19th Av. and back to 5th Ave. It added about 2 miles to my drive time. I'll tell you one thing. I never make a mistake twice. I didn't once and thought I could use the street during those times.

A - For the cut-this this doesn't help.

- Need more lh turns. I went onto my own street; I blocked one of the two lanes going s. on 7th street. That was my only choice to turn left.

- The only problem with that extra center lane in the mornings on 7th st. is the speed of the people coming down from north mountain. Those people are going like crazy. They are flying. We need patrol officers out there monitoring them. And they can catch a lot of them between Glendale av. and just south of Dunlap because that is pretty scary. And they're not just happy breaking the speed limit, they've got to dodge in and out of

traffic. And what you've got is these little tiny cars with somebody about my size where you can hardly see their little head, and they're just crazy.

Another - It still makes it inconvenient to go to work (the overhead red and green lights).

Still another - (overhead lights not working) Really you're only options to turn left are the small side streets. If you want to go East on Northern, you'll be sitting there forever trying to get to another street, so that doesn't really solve it.

Only in the morning

A – I think that how fast phoenix is growing, I don't think it matters which way you are going. There are still going to be a lot of people on the road going straight, turning right, going north, going south, and everyone's going to their own place on their own schedule, so technically just driving is an inconvenience to everyone.

B – I think it's inconvenient in the morning, but it's o.k. going home. Because I can go off central going left. I'd rather see the lane gone. Because people run red lights all the time.

– putting turn lights on some streets. There aren't very many.

– some people take 7th st. because it's faster.

-Red and Green indicators will solve the problem know. For people who are in the lane going the direction of travel. There are still people trying to make LH turns at intersections.

Time issue

Doesn't address cut-throughs

Doesn't resolve L. turns

Speeding problems

No added convenience

another - but driving is already an inconvenience. The R. lanes are not that different. It helps, because at least one time of day it's easy to get where you need, instead of always being hard.

Red Beacons on Existing Signs (highlighting the r lanes):

We need it to be red on one side and green on the other side going the other way so it lets you know visually that the lane's red and on the other side it's good for you to go.

– this is a problem for the people in the city who can't speak English – because all the signs are in English. Having the lights or something like that.

A = The beacons aren't meant to be red and green.

People prefer the red and green light.

Jokingly – the light rail is supposed to eliminate all this problem.

Don't help as good as the red/green idea

Better than nothing
Helps the ESL population
Less expensive

More left-turn possibilities at mid-blocks (address honking and stopping):

I think it would help with regular traffic where people don't have to wait until a certain point to make left turns, but like said earlier, no matter where you go it will be hard to make right hand turns with the traffic and everything else.

– if you have it at mid-block, you will still have stopping.

Another – maybe every couple miles you can have an allowable left turn.

Another – but you could get a back-up from that as well. The reason why they turned it off is you get that back-up. There are people who aren't that smart, and you'd have a mile long back up during rush hour.

– the way it is now, I have to look ahead about ½ and catch the time where I don't have to be stopped. When I can turn. If you pay attention and know where you're going (in support).

If I go there at the right time of day, I don't have to worry about being rammed into

Some relief
Might back-up traffic

Comment: I look far ahead and catch a break when I can find it. We shouldn't have to stop that much.

Calming Devices in neighborhoods:

- There has to be something to stop the people. It's very busy during that time period.

Another– One of the things in the neighborhood. Just North of where I live where there are no left turns entering entire east side of 7th Av. with the construction makes it hard. You have to go all the way around. You can't restrict left hand turns in neighborhood.

- People who live in that neighborhood will turn wherever they want; because they will say "there isn't a police here". I've seen people turn at the roundabouts going almost 35 mph almost tipping their trucks. I don't think anything will help. Phoenix is just getting bigger and bigger.

Another -There are only 1 street out of 5 you can get do because of the island. Islands help cut down on traffic on my side, but on the other side, not everyone has one. So everyone is turning right. I can see that right from my front yard.

Don't work: people still go fast
Will help...Islands help better than speed bumps.