

Chapter 5

Business Focus Group Results

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

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CHAPTER 5: BUSINESS FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

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Focus Group Overview

Four discussions were held with owners of 7th Avenue and 7th Street businesses. Two of these meetings were focus groups that were held on the same night in February, 2008. The first group comprised of business owners along 7th Avenue, and the second included business owners along 7th Street. The participants in both focus groups were businesses who responded to a solicitation made during the face to face survey (discussed in further detail in Chapter 4 of this document). Of four business contacts scheduled for the 7th Avenue focus group, three actually took part. Of four that were scheduled for the 7th Street focus group, just two participated in the discussion.

In order to get more input from business, two additional discussions were held. A 7th Avenue meeting was accomplished as part of the March 7th-Avenue Merchants Association Meeting (which also included in attendance a few neighborhood residents), and a 7th Street meeting was an informal gathering of about 10 7th Street businesses. Minutes were taken from these two meetings, and the topic categories from the minutes were analyzed together with those recorded from the two focus groups.

The four discussions were 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 business discussion 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 of the four groups 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. Table 5-1 below is set in order from greatest to least commonly discussed topic. Businesses discussed 31 of the total range of 39 possible topics – in a tie with Residents as covering the broadest range of topics.

Table 5-1 Focus Group Topical Summary: Business Results Highlighted

Discussion Topics	Bus Cnt	Bus %	Res Cnt	Res %	Ped Cnt	Ped %	Drv Cnt	Drv %	Total Count	Total %
Speeding on Street	25	13%	12	6%	4	3%	0	0%	39	7%
Traffic cutting through neighborhoods	14	7%	14	7%	2	1%	0	0%	29	5%
Decreases number of customers	13	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	13	2%
Congestion is apparent along RL	12	6%	16	8%	8	5%	9	12%	41	7%
Afraid/difficulty turning left or right	11	6%	23	11%	3	2%	4	5%	39.5	7%
Desire for more Pedestrian Amenities	10	5%	0	0%	13	8%	0	0%	16.5	3%

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

and Urban Lifestyle										
RL's are Dangerous	10	5%	5	2%	4	3%	4	5%	21	4%
RL rules are confusing to some drivers	9	5%	23	11%	13	8%	11	15%	49.5	9%
Dangerous environment for pedestrians	8	4%	3	1%	24	16%	0	0%	23	4%
More enforcement is needed	7	4%	8	4%	6	4%	6	8%	24	4%
More accidents in lieu of RL	7	4%	8	4%	1	1%	1	1%	16.5	3%
Hard to access businesses	7	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	1%
Turning out of businesses	7	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	1%
Necessity in lieu of freeways	6	3%	1	0.5%	1	1%	0	0%	7.5	1%
Honking	5	3%	4	2%	3	2%	0	0%	10.5	2%
Anxiety and Stress	5	3%	2	1%	3	2%	0	0%	8.5	2%
Afraid/avoid using the RL	5	3%	5	2%	0	0%	10	14%	20	4%
Customers complain about the RL or traffic	5	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	1%
Pedestrian Deaths/Accidents	4	2%	3	1%	7	5%	0	0%	10.5	2%
Illegal Lefts	4	2%	4	2%	4	3%	3	4%	13	2%
Delivery impacts	4	2%	0	0%	3	2%	0	0%	5.5	1%
Dangerous to cross mid-block	3	2%	4	2%	11	7%	0	0%	12.5	2%
Positive benefits of RL are worth keeping it	3	2%	10	5%	7	5%	4	5%	20.5	4%
RL's create better traffic flow/ reducing congestion	3	2%	10	5%	5	3%	6	8%	21.5	4%
RL is used incorrectly	3	2%	2	1%	0	0%	3	4%	8	1%
Road-rage	2	1%	7	3%	8	5%	2	3%	15	3%
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%
Light Rail/Construction Impact	1	1%	4	2%	7	5%	4	5%	12.5	2%
Weaving in-and-out of lanes	1	1%	1	0.5%	0	0%	2	3%	4	1%
Congestion due to busses	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%	3	1%
Run the red light	0	0%	1	0.5%	6	4%	0	0%	4	1%
J-walking	0	0%	0	0%	5	3%	0	0%	2.5	0%
Speeding in neighborhoods	0	0%	9	4%	2	1%	0	0%	10	2%
Start/Ending time confusion	0	0%	8	4%	2	1%	0	0%	9	2%
Shortens travel times	0	0%	5	2%	1	1%	2	3%	7.5	1%
Traffic lights and LH turns between blocks helps	0	0%	8	4%	0	0%	0	0%	8	1%
Pollution issues	0	0%	4	2%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Prefers least expensive alternatives	0	0%	4	2%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Total	199	100%	212	100%	154	100%	73	100%	561	100%

Emphasized Topics

The most commonly recurring discussion topic was concerning vehicles speeding along 7th Avenue. This issue was raised 25 times, which represents a 13% share of all the topics mentioned during the process of the focus groups and meetings. Other major issues identified include neighborhood cut-through traffic issues (14 counts, or 7% share), the reduced number of customers (13 counts, 7% share), increased traffic congestion along the reverse lanes (12 counts, 6% share), and the difficulty in turning left or right during reverse lane time periods (11 counts, 6% share). Other common themes relate to the business owners' perception of negative traffic impacts, such as the overall danger of the reverse lanes, the need for urban and pedestrian amenities, the confusing nature of the lanes, the need for greater enforcement, the prevalence of car accidents, dangerous conditions for pedestrians and many negative impacts on the functioning of businesses (9-10 counts, 5% share each). The only two positive topics of the lanes addressed were that the benefits outweigh the negative impacts and the idea that the lanes improve traffic flow and congestion issues (3 counts, 2% share).

These findings demonstrate that businesses are, nearly unanimously, strongly opposed to the reverse lanes in their current state. From the focus groups and meetings, it was apparent that many business owners live within a short distance of their businesses, which explains why neighborhood cut-through traffic was a common problem. Speeding was the most recurring issue for business owners. This topic, along with a great variety of other traffic impacts, was discussed very frequently during the focus groups and meetings. Business owners related a number of instances where they experience the results of major traffic congestion adjacent to their businesses, and many witness a number of traffic accidents, often between vehicles and pedestrians. One of the business representatives has been witness to serious accidents, and several other report to having witnessed and responded to major injury or fatality accidents in front of their stores. A good share of the participants feel traumatized by the streets and their nature of operation, describing the streets as a daily source of stress and oppression because of honking, accidents, the potential for accidents, noise and speeding.

In most cases brought out in the discussion, businesses experience a measurable loss of customers and impacts on their businesses. Business owners sometimes encourage their clients to avoid the difficult left hand turns across the reverse lanes and to instead take secondary routes, and many even schedule appointments outside of the reverse lane periods. For many, the reverse lane turns into a hindrance to business, around which schedules must be adapted. Several described losing faithful clients over time due to the stress of the reverse lanes. (One even has a letter from a client ending their patronage - the reverse lane is described as the principal reason for this change.)

Another interesting aspect raised from the focus groups and meetings is that business owners seem have the most experience with the reverse lanes when compared to groups from the other samples. They experience the lanes all day, or at least for longer periods of time, and therefore have much more opportunity to witness the effects of the lanes, good or bad. Even residents mostly experience the lanes in their cars and pedestrians are only moving through, so the overall burden of the negative effects are

less. It is no surprise that initial cries to return the lanes to normal operation came from businesses.

Most businesses seemed to be in favor of removing the reverse lane and returning them to standard two-way left hand turn lane. Many would also like to see additional traffic calming devices and pedestrian amenities both along the reverse lanes and in the neighborhoods. As a distant backup option, if it is not possible to remove the reverse lanes, other alternatives supported include installing additional signage or lighting that more clearly indicate to drivers how and when to use the reverse lanes.

Specific References

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

1. Neighborhood Traffic: “My house is just 1 block north of the light where you can turn left, so all cars in the south bound commute start ducking into my street one after the other, one after the other....They don’t want to wait at the light, because someone is going to make a left anyway. So they just jam down my street.”
2. Ducking into neighborhoods: “Drivers are afraid they won’t make the next light. Many take 3rd Avenue back south toward Campbell. I have a video of lines of cars. It’s the same people, because they’re dropping their kids off at Central. Once you figure that out, you have that light and you use it. Once the cars are backed up to 3+ cars, they just cut into the neighborhood.”
3. Danger of turning into businesses/Traffic impacts: “... and when you do make a legal left – I find this very entertaining in the morning – everybody’s blowing their horns to the person making a turn because they don’t know you can do that. There’s constant horn blowing in the morning, because the others behind can’t read the signs.”
4. Loss of customers: “I can see that our impact is larger than a lot of businesses, because a lot of businesses don’t open until 9:00 a.m. We open at 7:30 a.m., so we feel that impact.”
5. Loss of customers: “We close at 6:00 p.m. and sometimes stay open for people later who don’t want to use that lane of traffic [reverse lane]. Or, they have to go all the way to 15th Avenue and fight it through the neighborhood. I’m sure the neighbors don’t appreciate that.”
6. Lack of urban feel: “The city is working against themselves by trying to beautify an area, not allowing it to become what they’re trying to let it become – a pedestrian friendly place.”
7. Challenge with turning out of businesses: “I have a lot of customers I refer to other businesses on the street, and people are afraid to go north of me because of the direction of the traffic flow.”

8. Delivery constraints: “I can’t get any parts delivered until after 4:00 p.m., because the drivers won’t come down there. That directly affects our business. We have to time everything around our part deliveries...it’s a burden we have because of the reverse lane.”
9. Don’t obey the laws: “It’s not so much the city as it is the people. They don’t obey the rules. We had someone hit our corner and our tree and knock the tree – it fell over on the fire hydrant. We had no insurance for that. We had to have our tree taken out.”
10. Loss of customers: “We do lose customers in the afternoon, because customers don’t want to take the time to turn or to cross-over. People actually say that. Some customers say that they try to get there before 4:00 p.m. to avoid the lanes. They often say, ‘Okay, I’ll try to get there’.”
11. Accidents/Deaths: “The reverse lane, first of all, I believe it is dangerous. Pedestrians think it’s a safe zone. Just before Christmas, someone was hit and killed just right in front of our store again. About a year ago a motorcycle person was killed. About 5 years earlier another person was killed. This is in front of our store alone.”
12. Property damage: “I don’t [want] to get into the front of our store (because of severe traffic conditions). One time, a truck came, hit the car, the car hit another one, and it went over our hedge onto a car in our parking lot.”
13. Dangerous for pedestrians: “Those cars are not stopping when those people are in the crosswalk. And there’s no sign and no stop light. Now, when you put that together with the reverse lane, that even doubles the danger.”
14. Severe accidents: “There is a school across from us at the crosswalk (Colter and 7th St.), a high school. Those kids – they’ve got to either take out that crosswalk or install a light right there because in the middle was where the motorcycle and employee were killed. These are true stories. There was someone hit 2 years ago in that crosswalk, because no one stopped. My daughter went out, and the motorcycle guy was sitting on the curb, and she looks down and his shoulder bone is coming out of his shoulder. He asked my employee for a cigarette. I’m not making this up – this is a serious issue.”
15. Speeding like a freeway: “If you want to turn it into an urban city, you got to get rid of the freeway along the central corridor. It’s like a freeway with that lane. We have the I-17, we have the Squaw Peak - those are freeways.”
16. Removing the lane is worth it: “There are inconveniences if we slow it down, but we don’t mind.”
17. Speeding: “7th Avenue is a freeway – 50 mph at a minimum.”
18. Speeding in neighborhoods: “We resent outsiders cruising through our neighborhoods.”
19. Difficulty crossing and turning: “It is really difficult to cross the streets – [it is] too far between lights. Making a left-turn near Campbell can sometimes mean driving two extra miles.”

20. Difficulty turning left: “People have to make rights instead of lefts because they are too scared.”
21. Dangerous for youth: “The church youth - they are horrified, feel it is unsafe. There are many near misses.”
22. Inner Phoenix: “There is a lack of respect/concern for inner Phoenix.”
23. Affects Business: “This affects leasing. Corner property (west side) under-developed. Similar corner property away from the lanes (McDowell) is full occupancy, with waiting list. [Reverse lanes] lanes affect leasing rates.”
24. Less congestion at some points: “We don’t have that much congestion up by Northern. We might have more if we were closer to Dunlap, because Dunlap has that strange intersection where the roads all come in from Cave Creek.”

Comparison with other Focus Group Samples

Most of the more commonly raised business impacts (i.e. loss of customers) discussed did not evenly coincide with those most commonly raised by members of other focus group samples, with the exception of just a few topics. Topics that businesses discussed as well as the residents and drivers comprise the following: confusing nature of the lanes, congestion in lieu of the reverse lanes, positive impacts outweigh the negative, overall dangerous aspect, afraid of turning right or left and a few others. The dangers of crossing at mid-block, pedestrian deaths and accidents, speeding issues, honking, cut-through traffic and a couple other minor issues were discussed by pedestrians, residents and businesses, but not drivers. On the other hand, some issues were main concerns for businesses, but not for other focus groups. One interesting point is that businesses and pedestrians both mentioned repeated times the desire for additional pedestrian and urban amenities along 7th Street and 7th Avenue, though this point was not raised by any other group.

Conclusions

Of any of the stakeholders, business owners and managers spend the longest time observing the streets, and were therefore the most sensitive to the impacts of the reverse lanes. Practically all were extremely frustrated by the lanes, seeing them as benefiting commuters moving through the area to the cost and detriment of local accessibility and the inner communities and businesses. While suburban drivers move swiftly through, they deal with the honking, screeching tires, regular fender-benders, aggressive drivers, the occasional bloody injury or death and the frustrating impacts on how they manage their businesses. Some described losing customers or having to arrange appointments around the reverse lane times. Some can receive shipments only at certain times, while others close early or open late because of the lanes’ impacts on customers’ accessibility. They are angry at the inequity of the situation – they bear all of the costs and few of the benefits of the reverse lanes. Practically all of the participants in the discussions want to see their return to normal operation. A couple mentioned hesitantly that if they must remain, that improved signalization and more left-turn opportunities should be provided.

Focus Group Transcripts

Two focus groups and two meetings were held for 7th Street and 7th Avenue businesses. The transcripts for the applicable discussions are provided below.

Focus Group Minutes
ASU Traffic Study
February 18, 2008, 5:30 PM
Businesses – 7th Ave.

In attendance:

3 Participants

Team:

Aaron Golub

D.J. Stapley

Indro Ray

Format:

Introduce Study

Ground Rules

Ask questions and begin discussion.

Do you know how the lanes function?

Yes

Impair or Help your business?

Impair our business.

People heading north bound cannot turn L. into our business until after 9 in the morning. Our business is one where people come drop off their vehicles in the morning and come back to pick them up, so we have heavy traffic early in the morning and late at night. During the times when the r lanes are running.

Getting in and out of our business is extremely difficult in the afternoon to go north, and the vast majority of our customers live north. We're on the West side of the lanes.

They have to turn left coming out of our business, and there's no turn lane for them to get into.

With the timing of the traffic lights, when the traffic is clear coming north that they could actually get into one of those lanes, then you've got south bound traffic, because the lights are timed extremely bad, that you've got traffic one of two directions.

Do you have anecdotal evidence that people won't use your business due to the R Lanes. Has anyone said, No we're not coming here.

– No, they've not said "we're not coming here", but we have hired extra drivers and we now deliver and pick-up cars because of that issue. I have to carry extra payroll and carry the extra liability of having my drivers on the streets, because my customers have

a hard time coming to me. But that's one of the things that because we focus on the high end, we do have an affluent client, that they're going to expect a higher level of service. So, that level of service overcomes the obstacle of my location. They view that as a huge positive benefit they can usually come in and drop off, but for them to get out – typically when they drop off their car, they have a rental car waiting for them there, but when they leave in their rental car, then that's very tricky getting out of there.

They don't want to go south to work?

- Very few go south. but go back north. We tell them they can go right and then go south on Campbell and cut through to 15th Ave. We don't like to do that, but it happens. WE do it sometimes. If I can't get out, then I'll go south and go across Campbell to 15th.

What's wrong with Campbell? It's a street.

It's a residential street, and they are starting to put more speed bumps on it because of the cut-throughs.

Why not take Indian School?

Because I'm only 4 blocks off of Camelback. You're probably going a ½ a mile out of the way. It's ¾ miles out of the way to take Indian School, whereas Campbell is the ½ street. And, 15th Av. has been under construction too. That's a pretty tough one right now. Not due to light rail, but sewer or water probably. The light rail is bad.

Camelback is related to the light rail, and there's other construction on 15th.

Aaron – I've heard that there are some utility projects going on. They must've decided to piggy-back.

– Agree.

Do you think customers move things to the weekend to avoid the weekday hours?

Absolutely. We're open Saturdays from 8:30 to 12, and that's something we've started probably in the last 3 years. And a big piece of that is getting to us.

Some patrons complain?

Yes

Deliveries to your facilities from DHS and commercial deliverers, do they complain?

We don't have a lot of DHS, UPS type of traffic, but we have daily deliveries from all the dealerships with our parts, and they've timed them so they deliver outside of RL hours, so that limits the times we can receive our parts. I can't get any parts until after 4 pm, because the drivers won't come down there. That directly affects our business. We have to time everything around our part deliveries.

A – That sounds significant.

– It's just 7th Av. But, you know, we bought the property there, built the building, and moved our business. That's was our business decision when we moved there. I can't

say someone changed it on us. I can say it's gotten far worse than it ever has been, because of the light rail, 7th is carrying much more traffic. Plus, the average speed has gotten faster. The speed is ridiculously fast. I believe we have a very big enforcement issue. One of the things that is causing more problems and worsening the accidents in a 1 mile is because we have a lot more cool, funky little businesses coming in. People want to stop at those little businesses, so we've got more people making illegal lefts, causing traffic issues. Because of the success in the area, it's creating more issues than we had over 5 years ago.

We used to have lots of abandoned buildings, and people wouldn't stop. But now we have a lot of little successful businesses in buildings that have been rehabbed, and we have more people making it a destination, so we have a lot more illegal lefts going on. And it's both times of the day, morning and afternoon, because they're on both sides of the street.

I can see that our impact is larger than a lot of businesses, because a lot of businesses don't open until 9. We open at 7:30, so we feel that impact.

Aaron: what is the impact on your business by the way these?

As a resident as well as a business owner in this area – people are afraid to use the lane. The hours of operation on the signs are not clear for the people who are not familiar with it, even though the signs are posted.

The rl doesn't make the street pedestrian friendly.

Me, as a north central resident and as a business owner—it creates cut-thru traffic for the residential neighborhoods.

I'm afraid to use it, because someone is going in the opposite direction and not familiar with the situation, it increases the likelihood of head-on collision. It's

K- Is People are afraid to use it. Others see an empty lane and just want to gun it. and eventually, you'll run into somebody turning left and cutting through, it happens every morning. Right there is a potential for an accident every time someone stopping to turn left. There is always somebody honking their horns, flashing their lights. We've been at have a pharmacy right there, and we've had so many complains from older people. When we first opened that thing. The whole first year there were a lot of complaints about access. WE close at 6 and sometimes stay open for people later who don't want to use that lane of traffic, or they have to go all the way to 15th and fight it through the neighborhood. I'm sure the neighbors don't appreciate that. I also live right off of 7th Av. and that's where my residence has been for 17 years, and I've seen the impact. , and my neighborhood, and it's really bad and getting worse.

- explains to others that deliveries are having problems.

– We provide a delivery service, and our deliver driver, he's a very experienced guy, but we've changed his hours to kind of deal with it, but a burden we have because of the reverse lane.

– I have a lot of customers I refer to other business on the street, and People are afraid to go north of me because of the direction of the traffic flow. Because you can turn left

going north on 7th Avenue, and any of the businesses west of 7th Av., but you have cars are stopping in your rear when you are trying to do a legal left-turn. And people don't feel comfortable and safe making a legal left-turn when the evening commuters are flying up.

The same thing applies in the morning when your in the left lane going south. I'll give you an example, when I go to my business in the morning, I make a left into my parking lot. I'm on the corner. But I don't make a left in my parking lot, I make a left at Campbell because it's safer because there's a street light there. I think it's one of the only signs where you can make a legal left., (K – also a legal left at the hospital south of Thomas) And when you do make a legal left, and I find this very entertaining in the morning, everybody's blowing their horns to the person making a turn because they don't. There's constant horn blowing in the morning, because the others behind can't read the signs.

– My house is just 1 block north of the light where you can turn left, so all that s bound commute they start ducking into my street one after the other, one after the other....They don't want to wait at the light, because someone is going to make a left anyway. So they just jam down my street.

Cars, heading south into town get stuck in the queuing at the traffic at Campbell. Those waiting eventually cut east on Minnesota. Drivers are afraid they won't make the next light. Many take 3rd Ave. back south toward Campbell. I have a video of lines of cars. It's the same people, because they're dropping their kids off at central. Once you figure that out you have that light and you use it. Once the cars are backed up 3+ cars, they just cut into the neighborhood. Then they haul it back to Campbell as fast as they can, because we don't have any speed bumps. So it's like a freeway down our street. We were hoping we could block it off and free-up the neighborhoods.

(Draws a picture of the morning 6-9 s. bound issue.)

If you could eliminate the problem all together and just let people turn where they can turn, that would free up the neighborhoods. We wouldn't have to worry about telling them "no you can't turn left here" they could make a left at Indian School, Thomas or anywhere else. Then we don't have to keep posting "no lefts" for all the way down 7th Av. for all the neighborhoods. This has been a neighborhood burden. The COP has put the burden on the neighborhoods all these years. It should be the streets departments' problem, not the neighborhoods.

– Then you have the light timing issue. They have to wait until the traffic clears.

– As pres. of the historic neighborhood for 3 years, I spend for 10 years trying to get "do not enter" signs installed north of Camelback Road East of 7th Ave. After 2 ½ years age, I was successful in getting it achieved. Prior to that our traffic count #'s per the COP traffic dept., 800-1200 cars per day were going down Colter St., because it's north of Camelback Road, just like the first street north of Campbell road, they're making that left. Colter is north of Camelback Road. The streets North of Colter Street - Oregon, Georgia, we averaging 800 cars per day. Because of the cut-through traffic because

people are not allowed to make a left turn at 7th Av. Today we have the issue somewhat resolved by putting up the “do not enter signs” but it doesn’t solve all the neighborhood. That are south or north of us. “Do not enter” was put up by the COP. People still. It doesn’t say “do not enter” just no rights and no lefts. We had 80% OF OUR neighbors in support. You’d be amazed how many people break the law. 95-98% success story.

- They’re being diverted to my neighborhood and my street. Solving the RL issue will solve a ton of problems.

- That’s why we’re here. If you could get rid of the reverse lane, that would solve a ton of problems. The city is spending a lot of money trying to revive camelback and Indian school, with all of these beautification projects but if pedestrians are going to be hit by cars, it defeats the purpose. You cannot walk across – the shoppers. Everybody is in such a hurry, it’s just a dangerous. The want to rush to work and rushing to go home. It’s a freeway.

- It’s an outdated idea and it’s not going to help our neighborhood anymore. – I think we’ll get the enforcement once we get the RL eliminated. I’d love to see the lights like the freeways have that catch the speeders.

- if you want to turn it into an urban city, you got to get rid of the freeway along the central corridor. It’s like a freeway with that lane. We have the I-17, we have the Squaw Peak – those are freeways.

- if something happens in the lane, it affects everything all around it. I’ve seen roll overs, I’ve seen people get really closely skinned by cars, I’ve seen people on bikes. One thing happens in one of the lanes, it affects everything around it. I’ve seen people dodging going down trying to get into that lane, and then see someone stopping- then they veer back and then they wind up going off the street.

- Because someone’s making an illegal left-turn. People will get behind.

- I’ve seen it in the morning, I’ve seen it in the afternoon. I saw Once, Someone veering causes other cars to swerve off the street. I almost saw someone near the liquor store. I see it in the morning and in the pm.

- I think the RL, as long as it doesn’t prohibit access to people access to people’s streets, the little areas between the driveways can become beautify green belts. Can be a really nice asset to the cop.

- The city is working against themselves by trying to beautify an area not allowing it to become what they’re trying to let it become – a pedestrian friendly place.

- Would you want to cross the squaw peak to get a cup of coffee?! It is a freeway.

A – Revisits some of the issues. Signage. Removing the lane. Other than removing the lane, there could be other options.

1. Increase Enforcement –

- I called a police on a shoplifter. 20 minutes someone comes. there is a shortage of officers in the COP. And the expense of having officers- it's not going to happen.
- I call them everyday about various issues – vagrants, prostitutes, they can't fill that position. That would be putting a dirty bandage on an open wound. It's not an option in my book.

2. More clear by putting in Better signage that changes with time.

- I've seen that in other countries. It's a great system. It's very common. That should've been done 30 years ago when the City Ph. Was under a million people. That's still not going to cut down on the issues of accessibility and cut-through traffic.
- That will still cause cut-thru traffic and more speed.
- and Speed. It might even cut it even closer. I think it would be even more confusing for people.

– agrees.

3. Beacons

- There will still be cut-through and speeding issues.
- They might slam on their breaks... you just never know. More confusing at first at the least.

4. Traffic calming devices in neighborhoods.

- I still consider that a burden of the neighborhood, when this thing shouldn't be a burden. We shouldn't have to resort to these types of options. You'll see cars going through there, whether or not, cars will go through. They'll slow down, and speed up, they clip the sign run over the bushes, and it's going to happen. It looks pretty in the picture, but in real life, it's not going to work.
- the car rules are not very clear. The City have 90k in my hand even when I had 80% neighborhood approval for a diverter for 3rd av. and Colter (1200 cars a day) 8-% of the neighborhoods wanted this . Under the city guidelines that the city plays with, They wanted 100% participation on all 4 corners. I had 2 people that wanted it and 2 that didn't. It's gone - we don't have it. So under the current laws, and the city says "we'll give you this" If you use current guidelines, just because they say it's available, you need 100% sign off for that corner, and when you have 1200 cars a day, it's the most problematic home in the neighborhood. They had roll-overs in their front yard on several occasions, because they didn't want. So the whole neighborhood suffered because of that particular family and someone across the street form them. So just because there is an option under the current guidelines.
- You can divert some people, but they are going to find their ways around everything. They're going to get used to that diverter and will be able to drive around it a little faster, a little faster, or they'll find a street that doesn't have it.

5. Change the times the RL's are active (remove the am or pm).

- It's a 50% success rate. You're just safe to shop in the morning, or you're safe to shop in the evening.
- You're only going to stick the blade ½ way in. You're still going to have problems.

6. Change the location or length of the lane?

- You're not going to accommodate everybody that way. You'll have certain neighborhoods that are going to like you can have 90mph traffic north or south of me, but just slow it down in front of my neighborhood." The bottom line is there are morning and evening commuters. We have freeways. Use them.

- They're trying to make them neighborhood friendly, pedestrian friendly. Neighborhoods sandwich this road all the way down to McDowell. Maybe just keep it by McDowell. But then there's still are neighborhoods there too that are going to suffer.

-If it were shorter, what value is it going to have? It's not going to move that much traffic, if it's not of decent length to make an impact on the flow of traffic, then it's not useful. Why have something small that creates a problem wherever it is, if it's not useful?

- Was this implemented before the 51 was built?

A- yes. At least 10 years.

- In a sense, this was the N-S commuting freeway prior to Squaw Peak. We have 101, we have I-17. And the I-17 has been wide for several years. So we don't need another freeway in a central corridor.

- There are alternatives now that weren't there before. Signage is very bad. It could be improved like the lights you showed up here. It worked in Europe and it's very effective. That's not going to solve the other issues. The speed is one of the huge things. Someone has got to have the data on the number accidents. There is a lot of them.. IT HAS to have a higher accident rate than some of the other streets, like 32nd street. And you have the issue with the Businesses and neighborhoods that are suffering. I live north and outside of the business area, but it's still tough for me I really have to watch my rear view mirror, and I'm timing to get into the rl, because I have go left. Then, I have to go north of Glendale. I have to time my speed. It's just a game and is extremely unsafe.

- I go to Vancouver every summer. They use the light system is used in Vancouver. But the cars don't go 45-50 mph. they're going to Grandview Street. They obey the speed limits. Here its'45-50 mph, and I'm not exaggerating. The posted speed limit is 35-40. they're flying.

- 40 n. of camelback. If you're going the SL, there are people honking and going past you.

- the less traffic you have on the road during those hours, the faster the cars go.

- What about the potential for the new development – Melrose Pt.. I heard there's going to be another south of that. There a lot more potential problems.

- Reminds the other 2 about her comment about how "the success has created more of the problems that people are experiencing, because there are more people are trying to get in our business."

- What about breakfast places, the early people trying to access those business'. "Little mama's" "Starbucks" "Copper Star" these breakfast stops are open in the am.

The project being built on the East side – the Melrose Point (Place) project. How are those people going to cross the street? That's a big neighborhood. That was in the papers – it was dragged out for a year.

- I'd hate to see someone die in order to get it removed. But it's only a matter of time if someone's going to die. I've only been here for 3 yrs. I've seen accidents. I've seen a woman hit. But she lived on ...

A – there have been fatalities of that street. Many. On all streets in Phoenix.

- I've even cut thru your parking lot.

A – There are lots of fatalities all over. 50,000 in the US on the streets.

– Good point, I'm on the corner- with the evening cut-through traffic. and they cut thru my parking lot as fast as they drive on the street

– I think commuters will just adjust.

– Nobody likes change, but you once you get used you get adjusted.

– there are a lot more alternatives now that they didn't have.

– We're almost 4million now right. that's why we have the 101, the Squaw Peak Freeway.

A – Thank you for your comments. We'll probably see you at the SAMA mtg. next Wednesday.

– said there are more businesses now. Were there 20 within a 1 mile stretch (camelback and Indian school)

– more than 20

A – We were told there is a list.

That's good thank you...

Focus Group Minutes
ASU Traffic Study
February 18, 2008 7:00 PM
Businesses on 7th Street

Attendance:**2 Participants.**

Participant #2's background- We have seen on 7th Street an accident from our store alone about every 3 months. One of our employees Debbie travels on 7th St. from Thunderbird to Colter every am and she sees an accident at least 1nce a week. Most are caused by the reverse lane we believe

I'd like to see the City's statistics on how many accidents.

The reverse lane first of all I believe it is dangerous. Pedestrians think it's a safe zone. Just before Christmas, someone was hit and killed just right in front of our store again. About a year ago a motorcycle person was killed. About 5 years earlier another person was killed. This is in front of our store alone.

Team:

Aaron Golub

D.J. Stapley

Indro Ray

Format:

Introduce Study

Ground Rules

Asks Questions and facilitate discussion

Have you heard of the RL? Clear on how it works?

Yes.

Describe the way they are managed, time of day, limited lh turns, and how that impacts your business. Not the danger, but how it impacts:

–It really doesn't impact it in the am hours, because our particular business isn't open until 9. We do lose customers in the afternoon because cm don't want to take the time to turn or to cross over. People actually say that. Some customers say that they try to get there before 4 to avoid the lanes. CM say, o.k. "I'll try to get there". I haven't noticed, but some cm have actually said that; first of all, they try tend to drive faster in that center lane, they whiz down there, and they don't seem to have that perception. When they're going out, they don't seem to have the same perception as the cars that are closer to the sidewalk.

Some try to get there before 4 to avoid the lanes.

A – you're on the w side?

Yes. Both of us are.

Do you notice a dead time or a spike between 4-7? Is it more busy before 4 and after 7.

– We're not too busy between 4-5:30. It's much busier before 4, but sometimes people sometimes come after 5:30. We are supposed to close at 5. Probably some of this isn't as important in the scheme of things as some of the other issues.

A – Sounds like it makes your last hour slower.

It does make our last hour slower. People have mentioned it quite a bit.

– We're open 9-7. People have mentioned, especially if they want to go north. We tell people, just go south, or you'll get killed, because if they try to go north, they have to cut across. I'm at the west side. So, I say, just go south, turn at the light, and just go all the way around the block and then go over. (they go south to the light at Butler, or they'll go north to Dunlap to turn) or go out of the way to go all the way to Dunlap, but it's safer.

– I have to turn on Missouri, because I live east on Missouri toward the Biltmore. I go and take a right, take another right, go around the AJ shopping on Missouri, and then I go home, because I get out into the traffic. And they drive fast. It's the people – they don't obey the traffic rules. It's as simple as that. They all go too fast on 7th St.

– I agree.

- It's not so much the city as it is the people. They don't obey the rules. We had someone hit our corner and our tree and knock the tree – hit fell over on the fire hydrant – no insurance. We had to have our tree taken out.

– We're in the strip center. I tell people – start watching for the entrance, because when you're coming down and you down see it, you have to cut so fast in, and the cars are right on your bumper. You have to have your signal light on letting them know "I'm turning" for a long time. If you don't you have to pass it and you have to go all the way around. If you don't signal far enough in advance, you have to go past it and turn around.

A – From 4-6, (to M), do you lose business. Do your cm complain?

– Our tax business is different, because yours, you're coming for retail. People come regardless of the time of day. We do tax returns, so a lot of people come after their work. That's why we stay open until 7. They're going to come whether they have to or not. They do talk about the traffic a lot.

A – Asks about non-monetary impacts:

– I've never seen an accident. My back is to the window, but I do hear sirens all the time.

– A different note – I don't where to get into the front of our store. One time, a truck came, hit the car, the car hit another one, and it went over our hedge onto a car in our parking lot.

– I think there's more congestion down by you by Camelback. We don't have that much congestion up by Northern. We might have more if we were closer to Dunlap, because Dunlap has that strange intersection where the roads all come in from Cave Creek. We're kind of in an open area, so they're not going as fast as Camelback.

A – Do you ever tell your cm to go different ways?

– No. we just tell them to be careful when they go out. That's all. I think it's very dangerous. I'm glad you brought that up, do you want to hear my list?

List of Dangers:

1. Accidents that we've seen. Statistics.
2. People don't know it's legal to turn left in the left hand lane, exc. Where the signs say you can't. It is legal to turn L. from that center lane.
 - a. I'm afraid when I go to the post office. I'm stopped, my blinker is on, and I want to turn left. I'm so afraid that someone is going to smash and run in the back into me. Because they are thinking, oh, why am I stopped. They don't know that I can turn, or when I want to go into Tony's cleaners, and want to take a left. And this happens all the time with people. They'll afraid they'll run into you. 2 – drivers honk, because they are behind someone who wants to turn left
3. 7ths St. North to South is less busy than East to west streets like. Northern, Dunlap and Bell Road. If we did away with the Reverse lane, I don't think it's going to have that much of an impact, because drivers tend to drive faster on the rl, and the rl does not save the time, because you consider the accidents
 - a. Consider all the accidents caused, for all the time and money for the police officers, paramedics, fire trucks, re-routing the traffic, mitigation, not to mention the lives saved.

4. Signage is poor.

These are just a few of my thoughts, and I've talked to people. I'm surprised they didn't come.

5. There is something a more serious issue not related to your study. There is a school across from us at the crosswalk (Colter and 7th St.), a high school. Those kids, they've got to either take off that crosswalk or install a light right there because in the middle of the sidewalk there where the motorcycle and employee were killed. These are true stories. There was someone hit 2 years ago in that crosswalk, because no one stopped. My daughter went out; the motorcycle guy was sitting on the curb, and she looks down and his shoulder bone is coming out of his shoulder. I'm not making this up – this is a serious issue. He asked my employee for a cigarette. Those cars are not stopping when those people are in the crosswalk. And there's no sign, and no stop light. No When you put that together with the reverse lane, that even doubles the danger. That is even more of an issue I think. The drivers don't expect to stop. They're just whizzing by trying to get home. And they don't expect the high school. Students – they stand there, cross and the cars just go. The high school is for GED students, but it's still a high school. The possible solution was given by a police officer up north by some street. They were able to get a pedestrian safety island with lights that went into the middle (the pedestrian we saw killed was in the rev. lane.). If they

had some sort of safety island and did away with the rill, they should have some sort of safety island with lights, and maybe do away with that crosswalk, or put another stop sign. Because during the rush hours, they don't stop. That would help. That's not this study or a rill issue, but it's serious. More of us were going to come here.

A – Can we get a copy of your list? Yes

– This is tax season for us.

A – Here are some possible options:

1. **Enforcement of all the rules** (crosswalk, illegal lh turns, etc)
2. **Red and green arrow on signs**
M and N – we like this better than the beacons.

- Although another thing, if you put that on 7th Street, look how it changes the image of all these specialty shops. It's going to look like a freeway. And you don't want that image, because there are more and more nice shops. Schmitz Jewelers a lot or really nice shops, it's really getting clean. A lot of buildings are going to be remodeled, I'd hate to see that obstruction there. I can't see that on 7th St. or 7th Ave. with all these little shops either (the bridge in San Diego).

Are they treating 7th st. and 7th Ave the same?

A - Not necessarily

3. **Just add beacons, less substantial when the rl is supposed to be in force.**
- More confusing. That's another issue, because everyone's clocks are different.
4. **Add more lh turn arrows along some secondary streets to allow more legal lh turns. Because a lot of secondary streets. Maybe worse on 7th Av.**
 - a. LH turns is not much of a problem on 7th Street. The problem of that (Left hand turns) is it fights against the purpose of having the center lane to get the traffic out to the city faster. If everybody can start turning left, it's going to start slowing down anyway. Allowing LH turns will slow it down. It will make it look like a freeway. I want it to go away all together. Wouldn't do any good, because it would slow it down, and the whole purpose is to get people out of phoenix.
5. **Remove lane.**
6. **Remove just am restriction**
7. **Change/reduce the length over which the lanes operates**
 - a. That would be worse for my business. Maybe you could in your study, figure the areas where people are having problems more that other areas. I still don't think it will do any good. So you speed along a little bit , then it goes back to 2 lanes, what good would it do?
 - b. I see more traffic north of thunderbird to that thunderbird light, and once you pass it, it goes through the preserve. It moves through the desert

preserve because there are no rights and maybe it's timed better. There are more lights. Here, it seems it backs up more than it should. The preserve is nice. Then we go down and hit the rl. Are the lights timed wrong? I'm 3 blocks from Northern, it took me over 15 minutes from where I turn on 7th past Northern, and that was not even 3 blocks, and there's no rl lane. And when I get to that Mountain Preserve it moves.

- c. A – That's a technical issue.
- d. they do illegal lh turns all the time.

– They should put speed bumps all along 7th Street. That is what they should do, I'm kidding. They're not going to invite us back now. Remember we're being taped.

A – we like this.

Any problems with deliveries?

No.

Tanner Motors are right behind us and they run out all the time. It's screeching, we've dialed 911 dozens of times for people.

7th Street Business Association Group Discussion

ASU Traffic Study

March 1, 2008

General Discussion:

Oak and 7th Street – lack of crossing light is dangerous, prevents crossing.
Traffic counts will not show demand because no-one tries to cross!!
Could be “historic neighborhood”
Must often drive 3 miles out of the way to make lefts or get east west.
There is too much of a north-south emphasis in traffic engineering

Homeless people are killed at Oak/7th street
Traffic counts are off.
Accidents are routine (once three in one day!)
Street trees would be nice.

Q: How do the lanes impact your business?

1. Breakfasts at Macalpin's is not viable because on east (outbound) side of the street.
2. UPS trucks stop in the traffic lane – too dangerous to turn out and in
3. We (7th street business) deserve more for trying to make downtown more viable.
4. Frustrating – we are trying to stay afloat
5. Salon patron wrote letter to end service after years of patronage – “too dangerous to get to the store”
6. Salon owner asks patrons to cut through neighborhoods and avoid 7th street.
7. She is “afraid for customers”
8. Few schedule appointments during reverse lane hours (afternoon)
9. Weekend customers from cafés often are seen up in Starbucks during the week because it is safer to get to.
10. Before there was the 51/17 system the reverse lanes made sense – why now?
11. Tried doing breakfast service, but only Saturdays can get customers
12. The street dictates how I run my business
13. Originally liked the lanes, but they have gotten dangerous
14. Dangerous to slow down to turn right off the lanes (!)
15. Morning traffic horrendous – wait to go out until after rush hour.
16. Disappointed in City – North South emphasis on suburbs
17. Street is miserable and unfriendly, and prevents people from frequenting businesses.
18. Sidewalk should be sheltered from street

19. Big change in traffic in recent years – very dangerous
20. Speeds in excess of 45mph!
21. Speed cameras needed
22. Need “danger zone” signs
23. Calm the street down
24. End the lanes at Thomas? (others – no, remove entire length)
25. Increase in downtown population not met with re-planning traffic.
26. Need to enforce 35 mph
27. We are terrified to drive.

7th Avenue Business Association Group Discussion

ASU Traffic Study

Feb 27th, 2008

Went around the room asking for opinions of impacts of the lanes on the businesses. Some representatives from the neighborhoods were there as well.

1. East side of the street is generally impacted less by the lanes, because of the afternoon direction of flow. The two streets, 7th ave and 7th street are really frightening to many users.
2. It is really difficult to cross the streets – too far between lights. Making a left-turn near Campbell can sometimes mean driving two extra miles.
3. Need pull-outs for buses.
4. People have to make rights instead of lefts because they are too scared.
5. Crosswalks are dangerous because there is no enforcement
6. 7th ave is a freeway – 50 mph at a minimum – no enforcement
7. Church – we talk about the reverse lane in the youth group – they are horrified, feel it is unsafe. Many near misses.
8. Hear honking every morning. We open at 10, but by 4-5pm, sales are down.
9. Commercial Strip owner: morning bad – many vehicle cut throughs. This affects leasing. Corner property (west side) under-developed. Similar corner property away from the lanes (McDowell) is full occupancy, with waiting list. Suicide lanes affect leasing rates.
10. Most don't care about illegal lefts.
11. Do you want it to be a street or highway?
12. Slow it down.
13. we need a greenway
14. There are inconveniences if we slow it down, but we don't mind
15. We resent outsiders cruising through our neighborhoods
16. They chose to live in the suburbs, let them slow down.
17. Lack of respect/concern for inner Phoenix
18. encourages road rage
19. pay price in lengthening the commute (by removing lanes) but there are urban benefits
20. Fear factor – adds stress to our lives from fear
21. Passionate issue
22. Church – inability to turn left – we drive with headlights on in our truck. People are aggressive