

Los Alamos Monitor

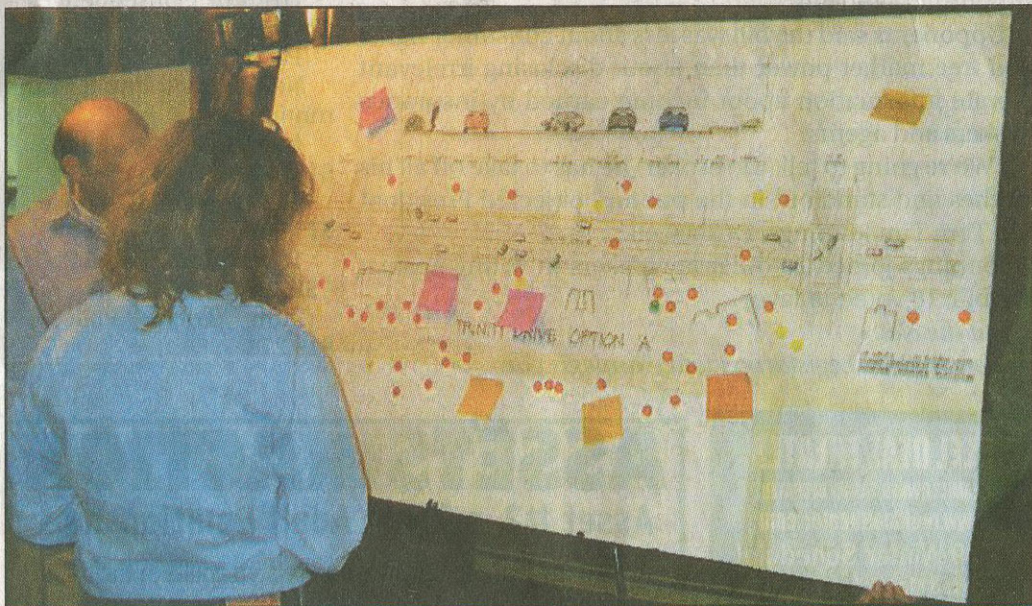
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Residents voice opinions about Trinity



JANIE O'ROURKE/Courtesy

DECISIONS Community Development Director Rick Bohn discusses Trinity Drive during a public workshop at Fuller Lodge Thursday evening. Trinity Drive is being considered for upgrades and improvements using one of several options proposed under the "Complete Streets" concept.

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Making Trinity Drive a complete street has caught the attention and fueled the interest of many Los Alamos County residents.

About 80 members of the public gathered at Fuller Lodge Thursday night to attend a workshop on how to make Trinity Drive a complete street.

The workshop featured Vicky Dugger of Dugger Downtown Development Services and Richard Zita of Bramare Landscape Architecture, both located in Portland, Ore. Dugger and Zita, along with Public Works Director Kyle Zimmerman and Community Development Director Rick Bohn, all gave presenta-

tions during the course of the evening.

The purpose of the workshop was to help residents understand what having a complete street means, as well as holding an open forum to get feedback from the public. The workshop was made possible by funding from LA Walks.

Wendy Swanson of LA Walks introduced the speakers to the audience and said that she's excited the there's interest in the project. "LA Walks strives for safety and comfort of pedestrians," she said. "Our goal is to help the county get the public involved in the planning process."

She also said that Dugger and Zita have taken on a project for the city of Al-

buquerque.

"They're here to provide an educational component to see how it works," she said.

Bohn began his presentation by thanking LA Works for funding the program. He also said that a Downtown Street Standards Committee was formed to look at problems, issues and address questions associated with streets.

"We realized quickly that the committee could not be restricted to county staff," he said.

Public Works Director Kyle Zimmerman also gave a presentation regarding traffic and possible plans for a roundabout on Trin-

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ity Drive. He also talked about the level of service for drivers, which looks at the average delay that a car is stopped at an intersection.

During his presentation, one member of the audience asked him where the roundabout would be located. Zimmerman said that he and staff are currently looking at traffic control devices and nothing has been designed yet. "We're trying to see which things work as we go forward," he said.

Zimmerman told the audience that traffic on Trinity has actually decreased in the past 10 years. According to a study done in 1998, the average daily count of vehicles on Trinity was 20,000.

A study done in 2008 revealed that the number fell by 5,000 vehicles, to 15,000 per day. He said this decline allows staff to look at the possibility of restructuring Trinity so that it is a two-lane road.

A man in the audience asked Zimmerman whether a two-lane road would be sufficient for emergency purposes and possible evacuation of the town, if the need ever arises. Zimmerman said that staff is working with the fire chief and emergency personnel to make sure that a two-lane road would meet safety requirements.

A bicyclist in the audience made a comment regarding the roundabout that was being considered as part of the redevelopment project.

"Roundabouts can be dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. Make sure you're thinking about us," she said.

Dugger started her presentation by saying that she and Zita been working on the Trinity project off and on for about six months. "We're just here to have a conversation with you," she said to the audience. She said that the main components of making a complete street involve a

balanced system for pedestrians, bikes, businesses and traffic. "We're looking at how to balance that out," she commented.

"There's a lot of opportunity for accidents and liability on Trinity," Zita said. A young lady in the audience commented about how it's scary to see children exiting the pool near the fire station on NM 502, crossing the street.

During the talk, three options for redesigning Trinity were presented to the audience. At the beginning of the workshop, everyone was handed two sheets of green, yellow and red stickers.

Huge boards with proposed drawings for options A, B and C were displayed and audience members were given about 20 minutes to go to the boards and place the green stickers on the option that they liked, the yellow sticker on the option that they had issues with and the red sticker on the option that they did not like. In addition, Post-It notes were also provided for the public to write comments about the options.

Following the stickering, Dugger and Zita evaluated the boards and counted the stickers on each. They then presented the results to the handful of people who were left in the audience.

Option A proposed new sidewalks and ADA ramps to meet compliance requirements, the same 5-lane road and sidewalk configuration, with no buffering for pedestrians. Option B proposed new sidewalks and ADA ramps to meet compliance requirements in addition to a signalized intersection, two bike lanes, two sidewalks and a vegetated median.

Option C proposed new sidewalks and ADA ramps

to meet compliance requirements, continuous flow using redesigned intersections, a vegetated median, two travel lanes, two bike lanes, two sidewalks and bio-swale treatment to capture rain and snow runoff.

The results of the stickering revealed that Option A was not a popular option, as it received a lot of red stickers. A few residents liked option B, as it received 20 green stickers, 23 yellow stickers and five red stickers. Option C was the most popular, having received 53 green, 10 yellow and 16 red stickers.

The workshop was only an initial discussion opportunity for residents geared to get conversation started about what people want to see happen on Trinity. County Planner Paul Belson said that there will be a lot more meetings. "This is great," he said of the turnout and feedback from residents.

"Having a conversation and learning other points of view gives us a clue as to how to accommodate each other," Swanson said.

Though the turnout started out healthy, by 7 p.m., a noticeable portion of the audience had left and by 7:30 p.m., the audience was even more thinned out. "It was a long evening," LA Walks Co-Chair Janie O'Rourke said. "It lasted from 5 to 8 p.m."

Following the workshop, Zimmerman expressed his disappointment with Dugger's and Zita's lack of knowledge regarding traffic control devices. "They led a good public meeting, but they need to get themselves educated a little more," he commented.

O'Rourke, on the other hand, was pleased with the event. "Vicky's exper-

tise is in downtown revitalization," O'Rourke said. "When people start asking questions on engineering and traffic counts, that's not her expertise. I can't blame her for that. County staff should have spoken up," she said. She also commented that Dugger and Zita worked very hard on the presentation and the purpose of their talks was to get a inspire dialogue on what residents would like to see on Trinity Drive.