

Chapel Neighbors Meeting with City of Sedona February 18, 2025

(2:00 - 3:47 PM; Vultee Conference Room, Sedona City Hall)

City Participants

Anette Spickard, City Manager
Andy Dickey, Deputy City Manager
Stephanie Foley, Sedona Police Chief
Christopher Dowell, Interim Sedona Deputy Police

CN Participants

Joan-Alice Burn, Mystic Hills HOA
Gail A. Digate, Chapel Road
Carol Does, Upper Chapel (Cathedral Lane)
Bob Haizmann, Lower Chapel (Meadow Lark Drive)

Purpose of Meeting

To communicate in person with City Management shared interests and concerns of Chapel residents about public safety issues related primarily to:

~ Limited egress for residents in case of fire and access for emergency vehicles

~ Traffic on Chapel Road, periodic gridlock, and parking on residential streets associated with increasing number of tourist visitors to Chapel of the Holy Cross, especially during spring break, Holy Week/Easter

Problem Statements and Related Discussion

Problem Statement 1. Public Safety

Major concerns related public safety, particularly limited egress to and from Chapel East area potentially endangering approximately 140 households

Discussion

CN members spoke to the growing awareness that the Chapel area appears to lag behind other sections of Sedona in terms of current and proposed City initiatives designed to improve infrastructure. City (Andy Dickey) clarified that the proposed improvements for FY 2026 City Budget are simply a beginning and other parts of Sedona will be included in subsequent budgets.

Discussed issue of limited egress and emergency management in Upper Chapel area with potential dangerous impact affecting approximately 140 households.

Police Chief emphasized need to inform and educate neighbors about evacuation routes and readiness procedures. Chief offered to provide small group information sessions to residents of Chapel area and Mystic Hills. Joan-Alice Burns indicated Mystic Hills HOA currently is planning a program on fire safety/evacuation procedures and will extend an invitation to CN.

Police Chief also suggested striping Chapel Road intersections (Cathedral Lane and Antelope Drive) with message "Do Not Block Intersection" to aid egress in emergency evacuations and prevent traffic gridlock at intersections.

Andy Dickey clarified that the Chapel Road Shared Use Path can be used only by emergency vehicles. However, in the event of an evacuation, any and all ways in out of neighborhoods are permitted. In addition, Sedona Police would be on site to direct egress.

CN (Bob Haizmann) shared potential sites in the Upper Chapel area where an emergency egress connector might be constructed. Note: Recently Bob Haizmann and Will Symonds met with Sedona Fire Chief Ed Mezulis and walked through the Upper Chapel neighborhood and identified three (3) potential sites.

City (Anette Spickard and Andy Dickey) responded positively indicating this idea was worth further exploration and consideration.

Problem Statement 2. Traffic, Gridlock, and Tourist/Visitor Parking on Residential Streets associated with Visits to the Chapel of the Holy Cross

Impact of increased traffic and gridlock on Chapel Road and spillover to Fox Road and visitor parking on neighborhood streets (e.g., Geneva Street south to Acacia in Mystic Hills)

Discussion

Explored several potential solutions including:

~ Micro transit extension into Chapel area (beyond current boundary at Poco Diablo - SR 179). Andy Dickey shared that a new city transit manager will be on board soon and could look into possibilities.

~ Revisited idea of an alternate parking site/lot that Chapel of the Holy Cross would rent to enable visitors to ride to and from the Chapel on Sedona Shuttle

Background Information: Gail A. Digate indicated that she contacted the rector of St. Luke's Anglican Church on SR 179 south of Chapel Roundabout several times in 2023, noting she received no response and Chapel of the Holy Cross did not appear interested in renting a parking lot at the time.

~ City has proposed mini-roundabout at entrance to Chapel of the Holy Cross (Chapel Road and Fox Road) to enable shuttle to drop off and pick up visitors as well as use a vehicle turn around. (Chapel of the Holy Cross has not responded.)

~ Explored possibility of City establishing limits for number of visitors/vehicles entering Chapel grounds at any one time. Not do-able because the Chapel of the Holy Cross was constructed (1956) and operating prior to the time the City was incorporated (1988). Therefore, the Chapel was “grandfathered” to continue operations as in effect prior to 1988.

~ Discussed strategy of requesting Chapel of the Holy Cross to institute a reservation system to address traffic gridlock and overflow parking on residential streets, especially during high tourist seasons. This type of system has been implemented in other popular national Forests such as Maroon Bells in Aspen, Colorado.

~ Explored speeding on Chapel Road and residential areas such as Geneva Street (Mystic Hills) and overflow parking on Geneva Street (north) to Acacia

Andy Dickey noted that if homeowners install boulders along their property to prevent vehicle parking, the boulders must be at least two (2) feet from the edge of the street to the face of the boulder. If not, homeowner can be held liable for injury or damage if an accident occurs. He further clarified that the City prefers to install the boulders. Homeowners should contact the City of Sedona Department of Public Works for installation of boulders on property abutting city streets.

General Agreements

Participants reached the following general agreements:

(1) Address public safety and improving access and egress in case of emergencies and/or evacuation - urgent/immediate, high priority item for City and CN.

(2) Issues related to the Chapel of the Holy Cross deemed important to both CN and the City and likely could be resolved in a period of several years. Most useful strategy to address these critical concerns in 2025 is to initially bring together the stakeholders in combined meeting or series of meetings to examine shared interests, define problem(s)/challenges, explore viable opportunities/actions, and agree on next steps and assignments.

Note: Carol Does and Gail A. Digate are certified professional facilitators available to facilitate this meeting. Stakeholders should include administrators at the Chapel of the Holy Cross, USFS/Red Rock District Ranger/Coconino National Forest, City of Sedona Staff, and representatives from Chapel Neighbors.

Next Steps and Assignments

1. Continue exploration of alternative shared use paths or emergency only connectors in upper Chapel neighborhood to provide additional egress route(s) in case of fire evacuation
(Andy Dickey/CN-Bob Haizmann)
2. Contact Chapel of the Holy Cross administrators (Fr. Ignatius Mazanowski and Betty McGinnis) to discuss important and urgent need to meet with City, USFS, and CN representatives in a whole group format to discuss expansion of Chapel of the Holy Cross parking lot, possible alternate parking site and use of Sedona Shuttle (Gail A. Digate)
3. Contact rector St. Luke's Anglican Church (Fr. David Cooper) on SR 179 south of Chapel Roundabout to explore feasibility of alternate parking site for Chapel of the Holy Cross visitor to connect to Sedona Shuttle (Gail A. Digate - initial contact; Andy Dickey - follow up)
4. Contact USFS Red Rock District Ranger (Alex Schleuter) to determine available dates for whole group (multiple stakeholder) meeting regarding Chapel of the Holy Cross property improvements (Carol Does)
5. Install speed monitoring device on Geneva Street (north side) to collect data re traffic and speeding, evaluate, and determine next steps (Sedona Police Department)
6. Install "Do Not Block Intersection" signs and/or pavement striping on Chapel Road at Cathedral Lane and Antelope Drive allowing vehicles to exit side streets and proceed west on Chapel Road (Sedona Police Department)
7. Invite CN to Mystic Hills HOA program on fire safety/preparedness and evacuation plans (if space in Club House permits); otherwise schedule additional program for Chapel area residents (Joan-Alice Burn)

Note: Summary document prepared for Chapel Neighbors by Gail A. Digate with detailed input from Joan-Alice Burn, Carol Does, and Bob Haizmann (Draft 02: 02.21.25)