



River Road Corridor Nears Completion

The River Road Corridor, portions of which have been under construction since the early 1990's, is nearing completion. The first reconstructed portion, from Fifteenth Avenue to First Avenue, cost \$7 million and was completed in November of 1993. The second portion, from 15th Avenue to La Canada Drive, was widened in 1998 at a cost of \$5 million. These improvements were part of the 1986 Transportation bonds.

One of the first projects completed by 1997 Transportation bonds was the segment from La Canada to La Cholla, making it four-lanes at a cost of \$3.8 million. It was completed in November of 1999.

Next followed the segment from Shannon Road to La Cholla, completed in November of 2000 at a cost of approxi-

mately \$4 million. This project included a new traffic signal at River and Shannon. Although the project was complete at the end of 2000, the roadway was not opened until River Road from Thornydale to Shannon was constructed.

The new portion of River Road from Thornydale to La Cholla was complete in August of 2001. This section of River Road was the first new major roadway built in Pima County in many years. The cost of this project was \$7.2 million. A by-product of the roadway project was the newly constructed headquarters for Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation.

The latest section of River Road from First Avenue to Campbell Avenue, which was completed last month, cost approximately \$12.8 Million. This project has unique retaining walls constructed by the Larson



Naturalistic retaining walls were incorporated on the newly completed section of River Road, from First Avenue to Campbell

Company. These retaining walls are protecting 60 foot cut slopes, made of artificial rock that gives the area a natural earthen look.

The final section of River Road from Campbell Ave. to Alvernon Way is the next scheduled project. Currently, the roadway is in the design stage. Construction of this project is estimated for 2005.

The improvements on River Road will facilitate increased traffic for many years to come. The reconstruction has provided many special features along the roadway such as pedestrian, bicyclist, and equestrian areas, multi-use travel lanes, attractive artwork, and most important a safe, efficient transportation corridor .

The Rillito River Restoration

In the late 1990s, the Flood Control District completed a multi-phased \$39 million flood control project along the Rillito River managed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project included construction of soil cement bank protection from Shannon Road to La Cholla Boulevard, Alvernon Way to Craycroft

Road, and the Santa Cruz River to Camino de la Tierra, as well as associated grade control structures. The project also included installation of six pedestrian bridges and linear park improvements adjacent to the Rillito River.

This project has removed significant areas of developed and undevel-

oped property from the flood and erosion hazards associated with floods along Rillito River. The pedestrian bridges and linear park provide recreation, enhanced aesthetics, urban wildlife habitat, and alternative modes of transportation to residents in the area.

The District is currently working on several related

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The Rillito River Restoration

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projects along the Rillito River including:

FEMA Flood Insurance Map Amendments. This year, the District is revising the FEMA flood insurance rate maps along the Rillito River to show the reduction in flooding hazards provided by these improvements. Final approval by FEMA of the new flood insurance maps is expected in the spring of 2003.

Linear River Park Improvements. The District is working with the Pima County Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation on addi-

tional linear park improvements, as well as a master concept plan for open space and recreation along the Rillito River.

El Rio Antiguo. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently working with the District on El Rio Antiguo, an environmental restoration project. The purpose is to restore a portion of the Rillito River between Country Club Road and Craycroft Road. Restoration incorporates non-structural flood control, water harvesting, riparian habitat mitigation, recreational enhancement, and groundwater recharge. Funding for this \$18 million



Trail and pedestrian bridge along the north bank of the Rillito River

project will come from the US Army Corps of Engineers under their initiative for Flood Hazard Mitigation and Riverine Ecosystem Restoration Program. Feasibility planning is underway, draft

alternatives for ecosystem restoration are under review, and the draft alternative selection report is scheduled for completion in early 2003.

Transportation Department Wins Two Federal Grants for Bicycle Improvements



Pima County recently won nearly \$1 million in federal Transportation Enhancement grants for two important bike projects.

Funded with a \$455,000 federal grant plus \$56,000 in local funds from Pima County and City of Tucson, the **Safe Routes to**

School & Bike/Pedestrian Education Program is a comprehensive community-based program to develop safe routes for children to walk and bike to school and to teach them the most effective and safe methods of travel.

The **Safe Routes Pro-**

gram will work directly with children, parents, transportation professionals, teachers, law enforcement, and school districts to develop route maps, surveys of student travel and preferences, bike/pedestrian safety projects, training programs for teachers, enhanced enforcement measures, and safety, educational, and promotional materials.

The **Safe Routes Program** is modeled after other successful family-centered programs, including the nationally recognized safe routes program in Marin County, California. The education component is a "bicycle drivers" and pedestrian safety program that focuses on child injury prevention. The program will teach pedestrian safety to 2nd grade students and bicycle safety to

4th grade students within eight pilot elementary schools. The program is jointly sponsored by Pima County and the City of Tucson.

The Dodge Boulevard Sidewalk, Landscaping, and Bike Lane Project will provide bike and pedestrian facilities to two elementary schools, and connect the City of Tucson with the Foothills area of Pima County and the Rillito River Linear Park. The project includes five-foot wide sidewalks and five-foot wide bike lanes on both sides of Dodge Boulevard from Ft. Lowell Road to River Road. The project will be funded with a \$498,000 federal grant and \$36,000 in local Pima County funds.

Balanced Score Card Work Team Update

Customer Perspective (Dave Cummings, coach)

Team leader Lisa Matthews reports that the **Front Counter Customer Service Team** expects to complete a *First Contacts Manual* (formerly known as the *Receptionist Protocol Manual*) in January. This manual contains procedures in telephone etiquette (e.g. personal greeting, announcing/connecting calls, effective language, etc.), as well as information useful to frontline staff, such as listing of upper management and their staff, departmental FAQs and useful websites such as grammar usage, Pima County Quick Reference and websites of other Pima County jurisdictions, etc. Once approved by Quality Council, the manual will be made accessible online.

The team is also considering using an internal, online survey to rate performance of reception areas, as internal staff consistently works with frontline staff. Matthews reports, "We are also considering various options to survey public customers, such as Team members randomly surveying incoming calls and walk-in

customers, surveying during returned calls to customers and faxed surveys". Receptionist surveying is planned for March 2003.

The **Citizens Requests Team** leader Annabelle Quihuis reports that her team has been working on linking four of the division's databases together in order to improve customer service and eliminate duplication of work. The Business Systems Management group has written a proposal to purchase software for this purpose and a temporary database will be developed, if needed, to assist with this objective.

Team leader Vernon Woods reports that the **Internal Customer Service Team** has completed all surveys for the second quarter. Results have been distributed to Service Activity Owners and Division Managers. Third quarter survey efforts were launched on January 8th. Woods reports, "We're currently researching improved methods for distribution of survey invitations". Dan Stalker, who has volunteered to lead next segment's (year's) Internal Customer Service Team, is now recruiting interested staff to participate on the new

committee. Stalker adds, "We're hoping that new members will be able to view the current process during our 4th quarter so that they are fully prepared this July when the new segment starts."

Internal Business Perspective

(Suzanne Shields, coach)

Team leader Joni Monroe reports that the **Process Improvement Team** is currently analyzing three processes: Submittal/Correspondence Tracking, CIP Contract Invoice and Reimbursement Tracking, and Right of Way Abandonment Procedures. The Team is identifying internal and external needs and examining tracking procedures for each. The primary goal of CIP contract invoicing is to implement a utility reimbursement process.

The **Automation Planning and Technical Support Team** leader Connie Ingram reports that her team has completed four processes and that thirteen others are in progress, most ahead of schedule.

Financial Perspective (Ben Goff, coach)

Service Benchmarking team leader Ray Draves reports that his team has prepared a partnering proposal that will be sent to prospective benchmark partner organizations. The team is developing a list of questions to be included in a survey to those organizations.

Employee Innovation and Learning Perspective

(Ted Payne, coach)

Employee Surveys Team leader Glen Dickens reports that the team is reviewing several example employee surveys from other jurisdictions. This team is also working closely with the newly formed **Employee Satisfaction Team**, which continues to work on formulating an action plan to address the four major employee concerns identified in a recent employee climate survey: communication, how employees are treated, training, and pay & benefits.

Board to Consider Impact Fee Changes

The Pima County Board of Supervisors directed staff to prepare a complete update to the 1996 Roadway Impact Fee Ordinance at their November 12 meeting. The Board received a report, prepared by the Transportation Systems Division, and recommendations from County

Administrator Chuck Huckelberry. Major changes include:

- Raising the base fee for residential development to as much as \$3,500 per unit.
- Adding a fee for commercial development.

- Extending the fee to all of unincorporated Pima County east of the Tohono O'odham Reservation.

Staff from the Pima County Attorney's Office and DOT are working on a new ordinance incorporating

these and other changes, and bringing the County's ordinance into line with current Arizona statutes. The Board is scheduled to have public hearings on the proposed fee changes and new ordinance this spring.



Kurt Weinrich,
Director

A Word From Our Director, Kurt Weinrich

As most employees of the Department of Transportation and Flood Control District are all too aware, we in government spend a lot of time writing and reading reports. I'm pleased to say that this first issue of the *Quarterly Newsletter* consolidates several previous regular reports, and more importantly, opens up a new line of communication with all department employees at the same time. The *Quarterly Newsletter* is designed to be as readable as possible and to be pertinent to your interests.

The *Quarterly Newsletter* will provide employees in every division of the department factual and timely information on what individuals and teams of employees in the department are doing that's exciting, what significant things the department has accomplished in the previous three months, and what new challenges we expect may come our way in the next few months. The *Quarterly Newsletter* also provides the same important information to the County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator – Public Works.

Environmentally Sensitive Roadway Design Standards

In response to the public's interest and acknowledgment of Pima County's valuable natural resources, the Environmentally Sensitive Roadway Design Panel was tasked with developing guidelines for roadway improvement projects within environmentally sensitive areas. The Panel was asked to address potential conflicts between preserving environmentally sensitive areas, transportation design and construction practices, and the ongoing need for infrastructure improvements. The Panel consisted of experts from several disciplines; roadway engineers, wildlife biologists, cultural resources experts, and a landscape architect. The resulting guidelines provide roadway design specifications that minimize impacts to our region's most valuable

natural resources. The approach defined in the design guidelines is intended to provide roadway design teams with environmental information early in the design effort, allowing design teams to adjust specific design elements to better account for biological, cultural, and historic resources in the roadway corridor. Additionally, the design guidelines provide some of the mitigation tools necessary to construct transportation projects in environmentally sensitive lands.

Environmentally sensitive lands are those areas that are unique and ecologically or culturally sensitive and determined by certain Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) Conservation Lands System categories, or carry the designation of a Scenic and/or Historic Route.

These lands may exhibit several characteristics, such as the presence of habitat for special status species (e.g., endangered species), vegetation communities that are growing in scarcity (e.g., cottonwoodwillow riparian plant community), cultural resources (e.g., historic buildings), and designated

scenic routes. The Environmentally Sensitive Guidelines include monitoring impacts after the project has been constructed to ensure that the implemented preservation and enhancement plans are accomplishing their stated goals.



River Road is the first project to incorporate the new environmentally sensitive design standards