

Comment Summary
Houghton Road, Central Segment: 22nd Street to Valencia Road
Public Open House; Wednesday, June 13, 2007

Desert Sky Middle School

**(Summary reflects comments received at the open house and during
the comment period, two weeks after the event. Comments are typed
from handwritten originals and are unedited.)**

Roadway/Traffic

Please set speed limit at 45 mph and enforce it.

By the way of background, I'd like to note that Saguaro National Park is one of fewer than 60 areas in the country that have been designated by Congress as national parks. The mission of Saguaro National Park is to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources within the park, and to provide opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy these resources. Saguaro is the only American national park located in close proximity to a major city like Tucson. This presents opportunities as well as challenges for managing this protected area. Two issues relate to Houghton Road improvements.

Old Spanish Trail is a major scenic access route to the park; its character encourages visitors to slow down as they transition from an urban/suburban setting to a rural/natural environment. The road has been designated a scenic route by the City of Tucson and is a collector street on the City's Major Streets and Routes Plan. The intersection of Houghton Road and Old Spanish Trail should be designed to maintain these important characteristics. Specifically, turning lane configurations and traffic signals should be developed so that through-traffic is encouraged to use arterials, like Golf Links, 22nd Street and Broadway, to travel in the City. That way Old Spanish Trail can remain a less-traveled collector street and scenic route for accessing the national park.

Please put in six lanes now.

Make roadway six lanes.

Add left-turn light at Escalante and Houghton.

Make bicycle lane wider than normal.

If there is a bus route, please put in pullouts.

At the main entrance/exit at Mesquite Ranch between Bilby and Poorman, it is very difficult to turn left (heading south on Houghton) from Mesquite Ranch due to traffic. Making this right turn only onto Houghton would be better than a frontage road.

Also, have turn bay or some break so that if heading into Mesquite Ranch main entrance from Houghton (heading south) you can enter Mesquite Ranch. Otherwise this has negative impact on traffic within the subdivision.

Heading north on Houghton - allow right turn into main entrance. This would decrease congestion on Poorman and Bilby. Remember, school is being built east of Mesquite Ranch and Bilby. People can still use entrances off of Poorman and Bilby to go to subdivision. School traffic and trucks will be on these streets.

Are traffic lights going to be timed?

Please consider allowing alternative routes during construction if possible. Construction at Golf Links and Valencia at the same time is not good.

I live in Austin Point housing near Golf Links and Houghton and I am concerned about being able to get in and out of housing area. I understand that a light is just not practical but a frontage road would be helpful.

Four or six lanes of Houghton Road should have the speed set closer to 45 mph and enforced. I think the amount of traffic would warrant that.

Please set the speed limit at 45 mph and enforce it.

I am delighted that Tucson will have a bike lane attached to the road as well as a separated bike lane (which will probably be used for more commuters, kids, etc.) Five-foot width is awesome. Thank you.

Widen towards the west, especially along open areas between Irvington and points south (away from housing developments already close to roads).

I really like the amount of space allotted for pedestrian and multi-use pathways on the eastside.

Six lanes will probably be necessary. Why not do it now rather than later.

Houghton Road is the only north-south road that goes by Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. I would like to see traffic flow given the priority over access to Houghton (not putting a traffic signal every 1/4 mile). Perhaps additional collector streets can be constructed to give many people access at a few intersections.

Would like to see dual-purpose bike lane/bus lane for entire project with additional bus pullouts as public transportation is established.

More "pronounced" right turns needed onto Houghton from Irvington. Currently, the turn is too sharp, causing slow down and unconfident drivers trying to merge onto Houghton.

Widening of Houghton needed.

Access to my street during improvements (cul-de-sac only accessible from Houghton). What will be the access to my street when improvement is complete (turn bay, right turn exit only)?

CVS at Golf Links and Houghton is an accident waiting to happen. Needs to be built out first.

Consider a signalized light at Houghton and Keystone.

Consider frontage road or pedestrian bridge at Secrist Middle School. You could cut to four lanes and traffic would still flow better.

I like very few lights and u-turn pockets. Consider aligning the latter to make left turns onto Houghton impossible. This segment is the most important to me, especially the northern section (Escalante to 22nd).

Widening Houghton is desperately needed. I now have a teen driver in my family and I have her avoid Houghton whenever possible due to the fact that it is almost always bumper-to-bumper traffic with people jamming their brakes quite often. The Valencia and Houghton intersection was recently widened making two lanes going north to south with the second new lane immediately having to merge left. This is now a mess because drivers are leaving the red light at a high rate of speed to get in front of traffic in the left lanes. This is an accident waiting to happen.

Turn lane into/out of Civano Boulevard. In seven years I have only witnessed one minor accident at that exit/entrance. Not allowing turns into Civano at that point is counterproductive to Civano's philosophy of lowering car mileage and emissions through Civano. It also makes it inconvenient when returning from town.

Would it be possible for all the trucks using Poorman Road to go south from the pit to Valencia instead? Somehow I think that by making a second lane on Houghton heading south at Valencia it would have been better to not use it until the second lane south of the intersection is finished. Going from two lanes to one makes for accidents.

Can the traffic light at Houghton and Valencia be more traffic-flow oriented? Too many times I have had to wait on Valencia when there is not traffic on Houghton.

Concern with current outlets that require or may require traffic lights, especially at Drexel, Poorman, and Civano.

Would like to see you widen Houghton from Valencia to Irvington on west side of Houghton. Also, recommend frontage road on west side of Houghton. Do it before [the] state sells the land. That way developer already has a road that channels traffic.

Prefer to limit access onto Houghton. This needs to be a fast road. I recommend you build six lanes for 22nd to Valencia.

I also recommend that you understand Houghton Area Master Plan is not a Bible but reference item. This is why I recommend frontage roads to relieve traffic.

Please do not do any work on Kolb while this is going on. It is our only "escape" route from Houghton construction. Good overall plan.

A turn arrow is needed from southbound Houghton onto Bilby.

Bus lanes needed.

Extend Irvington east around Civano to Seven Generations Way. Then Civano can use signal at Irvington.

Design intersections at Old Spanish Trail and at 22nd Street so that traffic stays on arterials 22nd and Houghton and does not take the "short-cut" on Old Spanish Trail, which is a collector, "scenic" road, and gateway to Saguaro National Park.

Widen toward the west, especially near the intersection of Bilby Road. Build a fence on the east side to protect the children of Sierra Morado and Civano. Noise protection walls on the east side from Irvington to Seven Generations.

Six lanes all the way.

Drainage

Currently Houghton drains into the desert. Where will the runoff go when there is a curb and sidewalk?

The drawings seem to indicate that the roadway and the sidewalks would drain into the bicycle lanes. Please provide drainage.

For drainage, culverts for wildlife under Houghton are good. Can culverts be sized so people with bikes can cross under Houghton?

Atturbury Wash is a big concern as it crosses Houghton. Atturbury around houses (east of Ace) is very large for water flow. May be a big problem. May want to contact "Friends of the Atturbury" (Michael Lyman of Grover-Lincoln NA).

Currently on west side of Houghton (Valencia and Irvington) you have a sway that water can be channeled to culverts. How will water be channeled off Houghton?

Environmental

This section of Houghton Road crosses several washes, which are important wildlife movement corridors. These include the large Pantano Wash and several smaller ones: Este, Hidden Hills, Eastview, Old Spanish, Escalante, Mesquite Ranch and Atturbury washes. Washes like these can serve as movement corridors or as "killing fields" for wildlife. We urge you to include wildlife mitigation in designing culverts and other structures near wash crossings. I will be happy to make a park staff member available to consult on this issue if you wish.

Concerned about noise level increase. Does rubberized asphalt really help? Some data or studies would be helpful. I think that a noise wall would be a bad idea (loss of view).

Need a huge wall on the east side. The wall will serve as noise prevention and also a protection for the homes if there is an accident. Please put the rubberized asphalt.

I strongly suggest some sort of noise barrier between road and developments (Sierra Morado) to lower engine noise and provide safety.

Consider temporary noise abatement during construction.

My second concern would be the level of noise. By expanding to four or six lanes can the noise be eliminated without a sound wall? I prefer not to have a sound wall.

I am concerned about noise levels during and after construction. Please consider using natural vegetation for noise walls.

Noise abatement wall along east side of Houghton at Civano.

The city needs to give thoughtful consideration to the traffic noise that will affect the residents along Houghton, especially Civano and Mesquite Ranch and Sierra Morado developments. Consideration should be given to construction sound barriers all along residential areas on Houghton. The number of vehicles passing these areas will only increase over time. Noise is going to be an ongoing problem and will seriously affect property values along Houghton.

Want information on rubberized asphalt and noise reduction (data comparing to route six AC).

Art and Landscape

Do not plant trees under wires.

Keep "greenway" on east side of Houghton near Pulte/Mesquite Ranch. These paths are used regularly and provide a natural buffer.

Construction/ Time Phasing

I would prefer all the construction to be done at once (as opposed to expand to four lanes and then later expand to six).

Widening should start between Valencia and Old Vail.

I expected for the project to start sooner than told today. What is the actual expected start date, with completion of entire project (Tanque Verde to I-10)? I would appreciate a response to this information above. Thank you.

What is the time frame for improvements near Houghton and 22nd (south and east)?

My first concern would be the amount of time this project will take. I would prefer to see sections completed at a time versus stretching the construction throughout Houghton. (Example: Valencia to Bilby and Bilby to Irvington).

Great cookies. Thank you.

General Comments

Thank you for inviting us to the public open house on the subject road improvement plan. We understand that you are in the data-gathering phase of the project, and we have a few concerns that we would like to share with you at this time, in hopes that you can incorporate solutions in to your design work.

I would like as much information as possible on the project. Thanks for this open house.

I look forward to the start of construction.

I thank you for your time and presentation.

Thank-you for sharing the plans.

Where will electronic transmission poles be placed? I presume it will not be underground.