



## **SONORAN BOULEVARD PROJECT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Q1: What is the history of this project?**

The Sonoran Boulevard has been planned as an important east-west alignment between Interstate 17 and northeast Phoenix since 1987. In 2002, public involvement efforts to site the project included public open houses, presentations to City boards, commissions, and Village Planning Committees. These efforts resulted in the "Sonoran Parkway Route Alignment Report" completed in October 2002. At that time, no development had been established along the project's alignment. The northern alignment was established in 2003. In 2004, an additional study was completed to determine the alignments of other intersection arterials at the east end of the project. That process also characterized the roadway as a scenic corridor. In January 2005, a citizen's committee was formed to ensure that community visions were incorporated into the final alignment. In June 2006, following the approval of the North Gateway and Desert View Village Planning Committees, the City of Phoenix Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Street Transportation Departments, Maricopa County Flood control District, State Land Department, and City Council, the City Council initiated design of the Sonoran Boulevard alignment and associated connections. Construction of the project began in October 2010.

### **Q2: Why is this road being built through a residential area?**

Sonoran Boulevard (formerly Dove Valley) has been planned since 1987. It can be found on Street Classification Maps since 1998, in the 2004 Sonoran Parkway Alignment Study, and in the North Gateway Village Core Plan dated January 30, 2008. Sonoran Blvd is part of the City's major roadway grid system which identifies a major roadway every mile to ensure that traffic can safely and efficiently move through an area whether it is residential or commercial. In general, arterial streets border developed areas. Collector and local streets are the roadway types that are designed to actually run throughout neighborhoods.

### **Q3: Why is the north roadway (Sonoran Blvd) being built first in lieu of the south 303 alignment (Sonoran Desert Drive)?**

The northern alignment was chosen for three reasons. The first reason was the availability of right-of-way. When the City acquired land for the Sonoran Preserve, the street right-of-way property was purchased at a reduced rate. The second reason was access and proximity to the Sonoran Preserve. The northern alignment accesses significantly more available Park Preserve than the southern alignment. Because the northern alignment is adjacent to the preserve, development cannot occur on the north side of the roadway and, therefore, development is unable to build or contribute to improvements along the north half of this roadway. The third reason involved access to I-17. During the planning

phase of the project the City entered into an agreement with a developer to complete the connection to I-17. That development agreement was not completed by the developer, but the decision to build on this alignment had already been made.

### **Q4: Why did the street names change from Dove Valley to Sonoran Blvd and Lone Mountain/Sonoran Parkway to Sonoran Desert Drive?**

The names were changed for two main reasons: to reduce confusion of motorists as they travel from east to west along the Sonoran Boulevard and to reduce confusion between the roadway alignments of the Sonoran Boulevard and the formerly named Sonoran Parkway (now Sonoran Desert Drive). Without the change motorists would have been driving on a roadway that suddenly changed names midstream.

### **Q5: What is the planned speed limit for the Sonoran Boulevard project?**

The existing speed limit of 35 miles per hour will be maintained from North Valley Parkway to approximately 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. From 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Cave Creek Road, the posted speed limit will be 45 mph. The Street Transportation Department Traffic Services Division will monitor speeds once the roadway is open and may adjust the posted speed limit as needed.

### **Q6: Are there any traffic signals planned?**

Traffic signals are currently planned for installation at North Valley Parkway, Paloma Parkway, and Cave Creek Road along the Sonoran Boulevard alignment.

### **Q7: Why isn't Sonoran Boulevard being connected to I-17 now as there is already an interchange at the freeway?**

When this project was being designed, there was active development at the Sonoran Boulevard (previously Dove Valley) alignment which would have participated in the cost of the infrastructure to cross Skunk Creek Wash and provide a connection from I-17 to North Valley Parkway. The Arizona Department of Transportation secured the funding to build the freeway interchange during better market conditions. The economy took a major downturn and development east of the I-17 has been delayed.

### **Q8: When will the Sonoran Boulevard be connected to the I-17?**

When development restarts along the Sonoran Boulevard east of I-17, infrastructure needs will be addressed although it is impossible to predict when that might occur. However, staff has been reviewing infrastructure proposals for development just east of the I-17 along the north side of Sonoran Boulevard and west of the wash. If interim or permanent infrastructure plans to cross the Skunk Creek Wash can be designed and privately funded, the connection to I-17 may be constructed within the next few years.

### **Q9: What is the projected traffic count for the interim and for the ultimate build outs?**

It is difficult to project traffic volumes for largely undeveloped corridors; however, the proposed one lane in each direction (interim condition) can easily accommodate 5,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day. Also, the department recently received updated data from the regional growth model, maintained by the Maricopa Association of Governments, which indicates that the traffic volume projections for the year 2025 (partial area build-out) are approximately 17,000 to 31,000 vehicles per day (vpd) for the eastern six lane section of Sonoran Boulevard and approximately 17,000 to 22,000 vpd for the developed four lane section east of North Valley Parkway. The difference between the two projections is due to the estimated build-out patterns along the corridors and the future intersection with Sonoran Desert Drive that will also carry traffic to and from the west.

**Q10: The project presentations have shown an interim and ultimate build out. What does that mean?**

As development occurs and the need for expansion becomes prevalent, the roadways will be further improved to accommodate the growth. The "interim" design for Sonoran Boulevard includes: two lanes in each direction between North Valley Parkway and Paloma Parkway; one lane in each direction between Paloma Parkway and approximately 15th Avenue; and one lane in each direction with a median between 15th Avenue and Cave Creek Road. The "ultimate" or "build out" design includes: no change from North Valley Parkway to approximately 23rd Avenue; four lanes with a median from 23rd Avenue to the intersection with Sonoran Desert Drive; and six lanes from the intersection with Sonoran Desert Drive to Cave Creek Road. A detailed map, which includes Sonoran Desert Drive, is included in the map section of the department's web page.

**Q11: I have not heard anything about this road until now. Why is it being built now?**

The City has been working with residents, planning committees, State Land Department, and developers on the Sonoran Boulevard project since 2002. There have been many meetings with Home Owner Associations and Village Planning Committees regarding the alignment details as well as online input from residents in the area at that time. However, development did not occur within the western segment of the project until after 2004. Major funding through the Regional Transportation Plan (Proposition 400) became available in fiscal year 2011 which allowed the project to move forward to construction.

**Q12: How long will construction last?**

Construction is anticipated to last for two years with completion expected in early 2013.

**Q13: I have a question about what is going on. Where can I call or send and email?**

You may contact Ms. Lori Pearce at [inroadsinfo@cox.net](mailto:inroadsinfo@cox.net) or call the project hotline at 480-281-1506. Also, additional project information can be found at the following website: <http://phoenix.gov/STREETS/sonoran.html>

**Q14: How can speeding be prevented through the section of roadway adjacent to the neighborhoods?**

Speeding is a concern and exists on all city streets. Speed enforcement is always the best option, but other options such as roundabouts at strategic locations may also be considered and are currently under evaluation based upon residential input.

**Q15: What is the ultimate build out on Sonoran Desert Drive (not the Sonoran Boulevard project)?**

The ultimate roadway will provide three lanes in each direction with medians from I-17 to the intersection with the Sonoran Boulevard. Most of the area adjacent to the Sonoran Desert Drive is currently owned by the State Land Department. When the land is auctioned for development the projected traffic demand will determine the need, schedule, and limits of construction along this alignment.

**Q16: Why did the City purchase land where the existing neighborhoods are?**

When preliminary design for the project started in 2004, no development (or neighborhoods) existed along the alignment at that time. A project of this size requires a very long process. Prior to development of the area, Sonoran Boulevard and Sonoran Desert Drive were designated as arterial roadways and were established as such in 1987. In summary, the arterial roadway alignments preceded any development in this east-west corridor.

**Q17: The projected traffic volume indicates 48,000 vehicles per day once both the Sonoran Boulevard and Sonoran Desert Drive are complete. When is that projected to occur?**

The projected traffic volume was originally based on the potential development assumptions for the year 2020. With current economic conditions, these calculations are now based upon the potential development assumptions for the year 2035 and are estimated for "complete" build-out scenarios. The department recently received updated data from the regional growth model, maintained by the Maricopa Association of Governments, which indicates that the traffic volume projections for the year 2025 (partial area build-out) are approximately 17,000 to 31,000 vehicles per day (vpd) for the eastern six lane section of Sonoran Boulevard and approximately 17,000 to 22,000 vpd for the developed four lane section east of North Valley Parkway. The difference between the two projections is due to the estimated build-out patterns along the corridors and the future intersection with Sonoran Desert Drive that will also carry traffic to and from the west.

**Q18: When will bridges be built over the Skunk Creek Wash to connect to I-17?**

The bridges along the Sonoran Boulevard and Sonoran Desert Drive alignments are currently under review. City funds have not been programmed for the full cost of these structures which includes design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and project administration. However, planning has restarted along the Sonoran Boulevard alignment east of the I-17 that may provide a connection to North Valley Parkway. Finally, city funds, for construction only, have been programmed from fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2020 for the potential installation of a bridge structure over the wash along the Sonoran Desert Drive alignment. This potential project still requires funding from private property owners for the design, right-of-way acquisition, and project administration costs that are currently unfunded.

**Q19: When the Loop 303 freeway eventually connects to Sonoran Desert Drive, will more houses be built?**

Most likely, yes, more houses will be built in this area. Development adjacent to Sonoran Desert Drive will be subject to approved land uses based upon the City's General Plan which is administered by the Planning & Development Department. The General Plan can be accessed at the following website: <http://phoenix.gov/PLANNING/gpindex.html>

**Q20: Does the Proposition 400 plan show what is proposed now?**

The most current version of the plan reflects what is currently proposed for the Sonoran Boulevard project. This regional funding is allocated to participating agencies through the Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP), which is a component of the Regional Transportation Plan. The Sonoran Boulevard project is listed in the ALCP for funding from fiscal year 2011 through fiscal year 2013. The ALCP document can be accessed at the following website: <http://www.azmag.gov/Projects/Project.asp?CMSID2=1065&MID=Transportation>

**Q21: What is the area of land in between where the two roads will eventually connect? Do we have any say in what gets developed there?**

Almost all of the property in this area is designated as State Trust Land managed by the Arizona State Land Department. According to their web site, the "Department has a fiduciary responsibility to maximize the income from the sale and use of Trust lands" with public education and public institutions as the primary beneficiaries. The currently approved land use is documented in the City's General Plan which is administered by the Planning & Development Department. The General Plan can be accessed at the following website: <http://phoenix.gov/PLANNING/gpindex.html>

**Q22: Do homeowners have any say on posted speed limit?**

Public roadway speed limits are based upon the design geometrics of the facility, the adjacent land use and density, and the frequency of access points along the facility. Other structural options, such as roundabouts, are being considered to reduce speed adjacent to residential areas.

**Q23: Shouldn't a connection to the I-17 freeway be opened up before traffic is allowed to flow through a residential area?**

Roadways are built in stages as projected traffic demands increase. This project is no different, and the City will continue to evaluate the community growth and, if warranted, the City will prioritize additional connections in the future. It should be noted, however, that the current Sonoran Boulevard project provides interim benefits such as regional connectivity, significant access to the Sonoran Preserve, and a new access to the east for the existing residents proximate to North Valley Parkway.

**Q24: Can traffic signals be turned into roundabouts?**

Roundabouts at strategic locations may be considered and are currently under evaluation based upon resident input. The final decision for implementation will be based upon the area topography, roadway design geometrics, location effectiveness, and available right-of-way (land) for construction.

**Q25: What about sound?**

No walls or noise abatement is included in the scope of work.

**Q26: What about street lights shining into windows?**

Upon request, light shields can be placed on the street light to limit lighting into residential areas.

**Q27: What is the current traffic count on Carefree Highway?**

The estimated traffic volumes on Carefree Highway range between 30,000 vehicles per day (vpd) and 20,000 vpd based upon the proximity to the I-17 freeway. For example, the traffic volumes on Carefree Highway near 27<sup>th</sup> Drive are just under 20,000 vpd.

**Q28: How will we get out of our neighborhoods and driveways? What about school buses?**

The roadway will be similar to any other developed subdivision which will accommodate access and school buses. The current roadway section (which will remain as 4 lanes) on Sonoran Boulevard east of North Valley Parkway will accommodate current and future projected traffic volumes.

**Q29: Will the existing Sonoran Boulevard (Dove Valley) remain untouched where it is two lanes in each direction? Will the project encroach on properties?**

The section of Sonoran Boulevard (Dove Valley Rd) between North Valley Parkway and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue was built to its ultimate section by the developer. That section will remain as it is. If future utility corridors are required, they will remain in the City right-of-way. Properties are not proposed to be permanently impacted, however, if removal of sidewalk or vegetation is required, these elements will be replaced in-kind or better.

**Q30: When will North Valley Parkway connect to Carefree Highway?**

Connection to Carefree Highway will depend on development of the area between where North Valley Parkway currently ends and Carefree Highway. There is

currently no funding for this connection nor is there any public right-of-way available at this point in time.

**Q31: Where will the access points be along the Sonoran Boulevard project?**

Sonoran Boulevard will provide main access points at Cave Creek Road, Paloma Parkway, and North Valley Parkway, as well as, minor access at all existing local street connections.

**Q32: When traffic hits North Valley Parkway where will it go?**

The City is evaluating the impacts of Sonoran Boulevard traffic on the North Valley Parkway intersection. This concern was voiced at several of the community meetings by many residents. The City will be conducting traffic counts and studies in the area to identify potential improvements that could be implemented to improve traffic capacity and efficiencies at existing intersections, such as 27th Drive and Carefree Highway, and evaluate whether extending Sonoran Boulevard across Skunk Creek Wash or extending North Valley Parkway to Carefree Highway will help alleviate traffic congestion and improve accessibility.

**Q33: How much traffic is expected on Sonoran Boulevard during the “initial” phase?**

It is difficult to project traffic volumes for largely undeveloped corridors; however, the proposed one lane in each direction can easily accommodate 5,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day.

**Q34: Why can't the gap between I-17 and North Valley Parkway be built now?**

It may seem like a small gap, but to build the necessary bridge connection an additional estimated \$45 million would be required. Staff is evaluating options for the crossing of Skunk Creek and may consider something less than a full bridge in this location in order to make the connection sooner.

**Q35: Can bikes go either way on the trail?**

Yes, the bike lanes on the road way will be 6 feet wide in both directions. A multi-use trail will also be provided on the north side of the Sonoran Boulevard throughout the western segment of the project that is adjacent to the Sonoran Preserve.

**Q36: Will there be street lighting along the entire roadway?**

No, just where Sonoran Boulevard is two lanes in each direction in the currently developed areas. Street lights are not currently planned for installation between Paloma Parkway and Cave Creek Road. There will be no street lighting within the Sonoran Preserve unless it is needed for those areas where they may be a driveway for an activity area or trail head.

**Q37: When will major construction begin?**

Major construction began on March 21, 2011, when the contractor mobilized equipment for construction of the bridges near the center of the project. Overall construction will last approximately two years

**Q38: What does a Construction Manager at Risk (CM@R) contract mean?**

A CM@R is a delivery method wherein the CM@R firm, in the case of Sonoran Boulevard - Haydon Building Corp, participates in the design phase by evaluating costs, schedule, and implication of alternative designs, systems, and materials during and after the design of the project. In addition to value engineering the CM@R firm also provides constructability reviews that on occasion create cost savings. During the construction phase, the Construction Manager (CM) assumes the risk for price by contracting to build the project at a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) and schedule. Selection of Haydon Building Corporation to be the CM was based on a combination of qualifications, experience, and proposed project management team.

**Q39: What is the project budget?**

The project is a CM@Risk project. The overall project budget is approximately \$40 million. The first guaranteed maximum price (GMP) includes the total purchase of all metal for the project and all plant salvage activities. The second GMP will include the structures, bridges, grading, paving, and landscaping.

**Q40: What is the City of Phoenix Public Art Program?**

The Public Art Program was established by the Phoenix, City Council in 1986 to improve the design of city buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces. Since the program's inception, artist/engineer collaborations on infrastructure like pedestrian bridges have won the City numerous awards for designs built to last.

**Q41: What are the proposed artistic elements for the project?**

Three bridges that cross the Apache and Cave Creek Washes will incorporate exciting art elements. At each bridge site, pictures will be taken of the native vegetation at the elevation of the bridge. These photos will be recreated as tile mosaics depicting the natural desert scenery, giving the illusion of an uninterrupted desert view. Each bridge will also feature balconies with shaded seating areas.

**Q42: Where does Public Art funding come from?**

Public art funds come from the City's capital improvement program. Like other city capital funds, these are used to build city projects and buildings, like water plants, streets, libraries, parks, sewers, police and fire stations. City capital improvement projects help to create and support jobs for a wide range of local workers. More than 1,200 local jobs have been supported by Phoenix public art projects in the past two years.

**Q43: Do you have a map of the entire alignment?**

A diagram of the alignment and other project information can be found at the following web site: <http://phoenix.gov/STREETS/sonoran.html>

**Q44: I have not heard anything about this road until now. Why is it being built now?**

Construction of Sonoran Boulevard is the result of many years of public involvement, meetings, and coordination efforts with the community stakeholders since 2002 including residents, Arizona State Land Department, City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department (acquisition of Sonoran Preserve lands), Home Owner Associations, Village Planning Committees, and home builders regarding alignment and details of the roadway design. However, home building on the western segment was just beginning in 2004 and there were few residents living there at that time. Funding through the Regional Transportation Plan (Proposition 400) became available in fiscal year 2011. This allowed construction of this project to move forward during a very competitive construction economy which has resulted in lower costs for materials and labor to build Sonoran Boulevard.

**Q45: How much will this cost and where is the money coming from?**

The roadway and multi-use path will cost approximately \$40 million dollars to construct. The funds for the multi-use path come from Parks & Recreation Department sources. The cost of the roadway will be paid for with regional and local highway user funds.

**Q46: Who is the Contractor and where can I see pictures of the construction activities?**

The contractor is Haydon Building Corporation. This company maintains a web site showing current construction photos. You may access it at: [www.haydonprojects.com](http://www.haydonprojects.com).

**OTHER ISSUES:**

**Q1: Why did APS place substation in the areas of these neighborhoods?**

The City does not dictate where utilities are located unless the infrastructure is being built on City property. Substations are placed to provide capacity to power current and future development in the area. As an aside, the Sonoran Boulevard project includes placing APS lines underground instead of the original plans to have utility poles and lines overhead. The City of Phoenix will work with APS to help screen their facilities. For specific questions regarding the substation please contact: Kendra Cea at 602-371-7872, or you can email her at [kendra.cea@aps.com](mailto:kendra.cea@aps.com).

**Q2: Where do the proceeds from State Land sales go?**

State Trust Land is distinguished from the public land such as parks or national forests because all uses of the land must benefit the thirteen Trust beneficiaries.

Congress, in granting the State Trust Land, recognized the value of the land and the importance of providing support to the public schools and public institutions. The Common Schools (K-12) are the largest beneficiary owning approximately 87% of the land and receiving close to 90% of the revenue. More detailed information about the beneficiaries, acreage and revenues can be accessed via links to the Annual Report.

More information: [www.land.state.az.us/beneficiaries.html](http://www.land.state.az.us/beneficiaries.html)