

A public hearing was held at the Wickenburg Community Center from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on July 11, 2002, to present and obtain public input on the proposed project. The hearing was advertised in the *Wickenburg Sun* and the *Arizona Republic*. Prior to the hearing, the Draft EA was made available for public review at the Wickenburg Public Library, ADOT Prescott District office, and on the project web site. One hundred two persons signed in to the hearing. The hearing proceedings were recorded on tape and later transcribed by a court reporter.

The hearing began with an explanation of the study process and how it had progressed since Public Information Meeting #2. Alternative 16 was described in detail and presented as the preferred alternative. The floor was then opened for a question and answer session. Two consultant representatives were also available with hand-held tape recorders to allow persons to make comments privately. The transcript of the hearing, question and answer session, and oral comments is provided in Appendix 2. Written comments and ADOT responses are included in Appendix 3.

Six people chose to make oral comments at the hearing. Five commenters made suggestions for the design concept, including providing a Bralliar Road connector, accommodating traffic volumes and new development along US 93 north of Wickenburg with additional lanes and signals, designating Wickenburg Way and North Tegner Street as a business loop, and eliminating the signalized intersections by constructing ramps. One commenter stated that the public sentiment was that the Interim Improvement Project was unnecessary.

Comment forms were provided at the hearing to facilitate public input. The form asked if the commenter supported the concept presented at the hearing and what suggestions, comments, issues, and/or concerns they had regarding the Interim Improvement Project. A total of 28 comment forms were turned in. An additional 12 letters and emails were received after the public meeting. Approximately half of the written comments expressed support for the Interim Improvement Project, while half expressed opposition. Many commenters supported the concept but suggested modifications to the preferred alternative, such as including a Bralliar Road connector, designating North Tegner Street and Wickenburg Way as a business loop, providing pedestrian and equestrian access to the river, synchronizing traffic signals, eliminating signalized intersections, adjusting the frontage road location, and extending the project limits farther north. For those who did not support the project, the most common concerns given included impacts on air quality, noise, aesthetics, and river habitat. In addition, several commenters felt that the Interim Improvement Project was unnecessary, would delay construction of the ultimate bypass, or would not permanently address the traffic congestion.

In response to the public comments in opposition to the project, ADOT has maintained its commitment to finding a permanent solution to Wickenburg's traffic congestion. However, due to the current uncertainty regarding the ultimate bypass alignment and funding constraints, it is anticipated that the ultimate bypass would not be constructed for many years. Although construction of the Interim Improvement Project will not eliminate the need for the ultimate bypass, traffic analyses show that the selected alternative will accommodate traffic volumes for the next 10 to 15 years and substantially reduce congestion and pedestrian/vehicle conflicts in downtown Wickenburg.