

ORACLE ROAD (SR 77) IMPROVEMENTS

From SEIC, by Kay Galligan

February 2009

On January 27, several hundred area residents and representatives from the business community attended a public meeting in Catalina, to review improvements occurring on Oracle Road. ADOT (Arizona Department of Transportation), the Federal Highway Administration and several other entities involved in the planning process were available to show detailed drawings, a video presentation, and respond to questions from the audience.

The project begins in the area of Tangerine Road and extends north to the Pima/Pinal County line, near the entrance to Eagle Crest. The length of the project is approximately 5.8 miles. Funding will come from state, federal and regional transportation authorities.

Basic Plans Include:

- Widening Oracle Road to six lanes by adding a new travel lane in each direction. The proposed roadway section will include three 12-foot-wide travel lanes and a 10-foot-wide shoulder in each direction, for the southern section of the project.
- In the northern portion (beginning at Golder Ranch Road through the community of Catalina): three 12-foot-wide travel lanes and a 7-foot-wide shoulder lane in each direction. The accommodation for bikes would include the removal of rumble strips.
- Installation of a raised center median with left turn lanes in the Catalina section. The pavement will be made of rubberized asphalt.
- There is no definite start date, and a contract has not been awarded at this time. Tentative plans call for an 18-month construction period to begin in 2011/2012.

Additional traffic signals are not included, and SaddleBrooke residents using Edwin Road proceeding onto Oracle Road were vocal about their ability to safely turn left onto Oracle Road. It was stated that a traffic signal costs \$300,000. The procedure to have one installed requires 11 "warrants," including traffic count, accident history, future growth projections, current design plans, sight distance, etcetera. SaddleBrooke residents felt ADOT officials were not aware of the resident's potentially heavy usage of Edwin Road.

Catalina business owners expressed concerns about the raised medians and the traffic flow to and from their businesses.

Sound barriers are under study. The current barriers south of Tangerine were not viewed favorably by most attendees. Due to lack of funding, there are no plans for wildlife crossings.

For addition information, please visit: <http://www.oracleroad.info/>