

Houghton Road Corridor Study Update: Alternatives for the Future

Since the publication of the last newsletter, the Houghton Road Corridor Study team has been hard at work developing possible roadway alternatives. The Technical Advisory Committee has continued to review and guide the study process and give input on the developing alternatives. The study team continues to meet with neighborhood associations and groups of concerned parties to further inform and gather information from all pertinent viewpoints.

The study team has developed a set of preliminary alternatives for interim improvements, year 2030 improvements and ultimate corridor build-out design. On September 29 and October 1, 2003, alternatives will be presented to the public for their input. This vital step will help assure that the study team's final recommendations reflect the views of all concerned citizens. Following these public forums and operational analysis and access control studies, the most desirable roadway improvement alternative for each segment of the corridor will be finalized. These designs will then be studied even more extensively, and cost estimates to construct them will be developed. The study team expects to complete the study and present final recommendations in January of 2004.

Roadway Recommendations

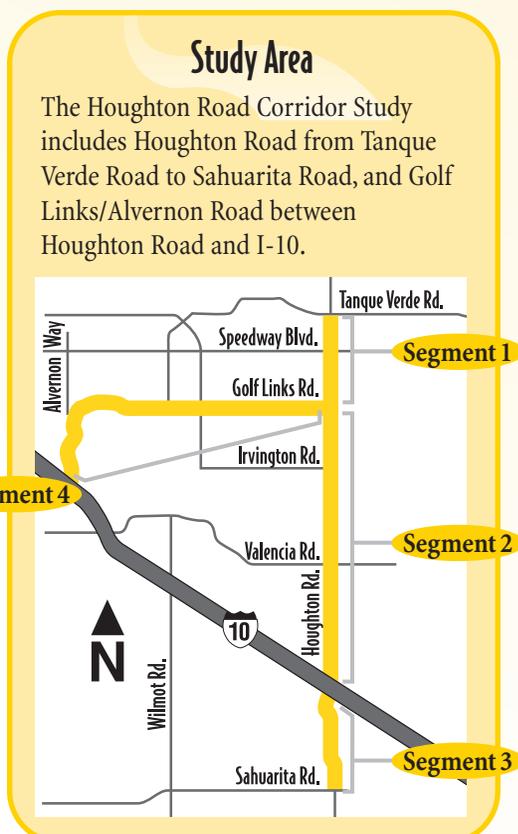
The study team has developed a set of recommendations for the corridor that reflect projections for the changing nature of this area over time. The team divided the corridor into four geographical segments to better represent its divergent nature of growth and traffic patterns.

The study team then developed a set of eight typical sections of roadway design that reflect varying numbers of lanes, level of access to the roadway, medians, bike lanes, pedestrian areas, roadway types and right-of-way widths. From these typical sections, the team has made a recommendation for each segment of the corridor at specific points in time.

Because the needs of various segments of the corridor will change and develop as homes, businesses, schools and other types of development are added to the area, the study team has divided the future of the corridor into three periods of time. Recommendations for roadway improvements and design are based on projected transportation needs and conditions for each time period. The periods are: Interim condition (0 to 20 years from 2003); year 2030; and Build Out (corridor development potential fully realized).

Recommendations:

The team recommends keeping the existing horizontal alignment for Houghton Road with corrections for safety and widening within the 150' right-of-way. The vertical alignment recommended by the team would replace outdated overpasses at I-10 and the railroad, and alleviate flooding problems along Houghton Road. The team recommends replacing the overpass at I-10.



Segment 1 Houghton Road from Tanque Verde to Golf Links

Interim: In high-traffic areas and locations with critical turning movements, expand to a rural 2- to 4-lane roadway with a 20' median and moderate access control, and construct drainage improvements.

2030: Expand entire segment to a 4-lane urban arterial road.

Build Out: Expand to an 8-lane limited access parkway.

Segment 2 Houghton Road from Golf Links to I-10

Interim: The same changes as Segment 1, with intersection improvements and signalization at Irvington and Escalante roads and at the westbound I-10 ramps. The next priority will be signalizing Old Vail Road.

2030: Expand entire segment to a 6-lane limited access parkway or 4- to 6-lane freeway.

Build Out: Expand to an 8-lane limited access parkway or freeway-type section.

Segment 3 Houghton Road from I-10 to Sahuarita Road

Interim: Same as Segments 1 & 2 with intersection improvements and signalization at eastbound I-10 ramps.

2030: Continue parkway or freeway from Segment 2 from I-10 to Dawn. Add a 4-lane urban arterial from Dawn to Sahuarita Rd.

Build Out: Expand to an 8-lane limited access parkway or freeway-type section.

Segment 4 Golf Links/Alvernon loop from Houghton Rd. to I-10

As part of this study, implement access-control to improve level of service at Kolb and Craycroft intersections.

Interim: Add signalized at-grade (same elevation) intersection at Alvernon Way and Aviation Parkway.

2030: No further changes.

Build Out: Add free-flow traffic interchange at Golf Links and Alvernon Way.



c/o Gordley Design Group
 2540 N. Tucson Blvd.
 Tucson, AZ 85716

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Public Participation Update

To date, public participation efforts have focused on obtaining a clear picture of the current corridor, disseminating that information to the general public and gathering their input on future corridor needs. The public participation plan, which includes formal public meetings, informal group meetings, an informational website, newsletters and comment forms, has been fully utilized. Additionally, an extensive “How Shall We Grow” survey from the Southeast Planning and Coordinating Committee was distributed to corridor property owners, residents and businesses. Here is a brief recap of the results of some of these efforts:

Formal Public Meetings

The first set of three public meetings, held in November of 2002, familiarized the public with the study and sought their input. Comment forms handed out at the meetings and subsequently posted on the website, www.houghtonroad.com, yielded 149 responses. Most believed Houghton Road should be widened and improved while keeping its scenic nature. The next set of three public meetings will take place on September 29 and October 1, 2003, to present suggested roadway concepts for the year 2030 and seek public input on those concepts.

Informal Group Meetings

The study team continues to meet with homeowner and neighborhood associations and special interest groups. These small group meetings allow the team to address problems and concerns specific to the group. To arrange an informal meeting, contact Jan Gordley or Amy Ramsden at (520) 327-6077.

“How Shall We Grow” Survey Results

The “How Shall We Grow” survey was distributed in the fall of 2002 by the Southeast Planning and Coordinating Committee to area property owners, residents and businesses. Of the nearly 2,000 respondents to the survey, 63% were homeowners, 22% were renters and the remaining respondents were business owners, landowners and area employees along the corridor from Tanque Verde to and including Corona de Tucson. The results of the survey revealed the following:

- Ranking first of four top priorities for the area was transportation, second was parks and recreation, third was commercial development, followed closely by K-12 schools.
- Regarding area road widening needs, 79% agreed that Houghton should be widened between I-10 and Speedway. More than 60% agreed that Irvington should be widened between Houghton and Kolb.
- 54% preferred a 4- to 6-lane divided roadway with turn lanes to serve over the next ten years, 19% preferred a 2- to 4-lane undivided roadway, 18% preferred a limited access parkway and 9% preferred a freeway connecting I-10 to Golf Links via Houghton.

Contact Information

Jan Gordley
 Amy Ramsden
 Gordley Design Group
 Public Information
 2540 N. Tucson Blvd.
 Tucson, AZ 85716
 (520)327.6077 • Fax: (520)327.4687
amy@gordleydesign.com

Laurel Parker
 Arizona Department of Transportation
 Project Manager
 (520)620.5430 • Fax: (520)903.9969

Robin Raine
 AMEC Infrastructure
 Project Manager
 (520)219.4998 • Fax: (520)219.0499

website
www.houghtonroad.com

Upcoming Public Meetings

Monday, September 29,
 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
 Desert Sky Middle School
 9950 Rankin Loop

Wednesday, October 1,
 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
 Pantano Christian Church
 10355 E. 29th St.