

Article for publication: US 60 By-Pass of Gold Canyon/Peralta Communities

In the past several months there have been articles, Opinion Editorials, and Letters to the Editor in the local news publications discussing the present and future planning of the Gold Canyon/Peralta/Entrada Del Oro area.

Some thirty years ago, Gold Canyon residents formed an organization to coordinate the voices of its citizens and property owners – that organization is called the **Association for the Development Of a Better Environment (A.D.O.B.E.)**. A.D.O.B.E. is not an “environmental” organization – it was organized to make Gold Canyon a better place to live (a “better environment”). You’ve probably read the A.D.O.B.E. News column in the Superstition Living magazine.

It is apparent from the various articles in the local newspapers that the writers are unaware that A.D.O.B.E. already is the established organization with political clout to address many of the concerns raised. People have expressed concerns about traffic congestion during the Renaissance Festival, about overtures to incorporate with Apache Junction, and the proposed alternate egress from Peralta Trail along Sleepy Hollow Trail.

A.D.O.B.E. has a number of committees assigned to task these kinds of issues and use the A.D.O.B.E. forum to disseminate information and involve our community in public debate. For example, since its inception, A.D.O.B.E. has had a “Roads Committee” which is charged with the responsibility of looking into and pursuing local road issues in the Gold Canyon/Peralta/Entrada Del Oro area. One of the issues the Committee looked at concerned the increasing congestion created by traffic traveling through Gold Canyon along US 60.

In 1999, it came to A.D.O.B.E.’s attention that the Arizona Department of Transportation (A.D.O.T.) planned to extend a full-scale version of the Superstition Freeway (US 60) through the Gold Canyon area to Globe. The proposed A.D.O.T. plan would have allowed for only two exits for local traffic, cut off access to local businesses (and to the newly constructed Gold Canyon fire and rescue station), as well as increased traffic speeds.

A.D.O.B.E. viewed the plan as a threat to the future growth and property values of the Gold Canyon area and called for a public meeting. The Gold Canyon community unanimously voted down the A.D.O.T. proposed design plans at an A.D.O.B.E. sponsored Public Forum (with overflow attendance).

Following that meeting, between the spring of 2000 thru 2003, the A.D.O.B.E. Roads Committee pursued efforts to create a Gold Canyon Bypass plan in lieu of the rejected A.D.O.T. plan. The Bypass plan called for the Superstition Freeway to be re-routed around Gold Canyon one mile south of the existing US 60 roadway while the existing road would remain for local traffic only. The Committee met with the A.D.O.T. staff, the engineering company, and A.D.O.T. Board members, until finally meeting with then Gov. Jane Hull (thanks to the support of then Arizona Sen. Jake Flake). A.D.O.T. agreed to have the Bypass project planned, engineered, and environmental studies completed. It took until 2008 for the project plan to actually be put on A.D.O.T.'s schedule and in 2012 the Gold Canyon Bypass plan was finally completed by Jacobs Engineering (including all engineering costs, environmental study cost, and other cost considerations).

The plans stalled at that point and then, due to other State transportation priorities taking precedent, the Bypass project actually moved down on the A.D.O.T. scheduling priority list.

At present, the plan is still an open active file with A.D.O.T. and Pinal County. Over the years, despite the active support of former Pinal County Supervisor Sandie Smith; former Pinal County Supervisor Brian Martin, and current Pinal County Supervisor Todd House the Bypass project is still not on the A.D.O.T. five-year plan (A.D.O.T. cites lack of funding and other projects taking priority).

Frustrated with this stalemate, the A.D.O.B.E. Roads Committee began in May 2018 to take actions to move the Gold Canyon Bypass project along and has been meeting several times a month since then. Here is a summary of a few of our recent activities:

- Met with Pinal County Supervisor Todd House (Completed July 2018)
- Received support from the City of Apache Junction City Manager (Completed August 2018)
- Polled LD16 Candidates (Completed October 2018)
- Conducted Gold Canyon Property Owner and Business Community Surveys (Completed August 2018)
- Developed a strategy for public input through A.D.O.B.E. (Completed January 2019)

- Met with Pinal County Partnership (Completed January 2019) (it supports connection to the North/South Corridor)
- Met with ADOT Board member Stanton; ADOT staff, Pinal County Engineering; Arizona State Transportation Board; Pinal County Public Works in Gold Canyon. (Completed March 2019)
- Attended “State of the County Meeting” (Completed April 2019)

We can see by the articles published in the local papers that there are many independent voices within and outside our Gold Canyon/Peralta/Canyon Del Oro community. The unintended result of so many separate voices becomes ‘Divide and Conquer’, and nothing gets done.

A.D.O.B.E. invites everyone to take advantage of A.D.O.B.E.’s wealth of experience and contacts and join together with us to advance our common goals. The A.D.O.B.E. Roads Committee is just an illustration of the activity we can do together to improve the Gold Canyon/Peralta/Canyon Del Oro area if we remain focused with a single voice. Let’s consider funneling the issues, concerns, and needs of our community through the established source of communication – A.D.O.B.E. We welcome all those interested in our community to get involved and take an active part. Contact any A.D.O.B.E. Board Member listed in the Superstition Living magazine delivered to your home.

The Committees are active twelve months out of the year (the monthly A.D.O.B.E. meetings are suspended during the summer months). Get involved and participate; make the established forum effective. We have only ourselves to hold accountable.

Thank you for your citizen involvement,

A.D.O.B.E. Roads Committee

Don Dougherty; Co-Chairperson

Ron Harris; Co-Chairperson