

SAFETY

Making mobility a priority

Bicycle, pedestrian safety encouraged

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

While Maricopa County officials reach out to residents to help craft a plan for active transportation, reminders about bicycle and pedestrian safety also appears necessary.

County officials' plan involves human-powered modes of transportation, mostly bicycling and pedestrians. The plan is expected to increase access to those modes in communities throughout the county. With input from the community, planners aim to eliminate gaps in access to services in the Sun Cities and elsewhere, said Reed Kempton, Maricopa Department of Transportation senior planner.

"I need to know from you what you want for us to do," said Mr. Kempton, an avid

PROVIDE INPUT:
Maricopa County Active Transportation Plan input
Visit www.gis.maricopa.gov/atp
Arizona Department of Transportation bicycle safety tips
Visit www.azdot.gov
general search for "Bicycle safety is everyone's responsibility"

cyclist. "This plan will supersede the 1999 MC-DOT bike plan."

But for at least one cyclist, enhanced safety might be in order first. At about 8:02 a.m. April 26, Antoni Ramotowski was riding his mountain bike east on Greenway Road near Bolivar Drive and was struck head-on by a Mitsubishi Lancer driven west by Roxanne Barnett. Mr. Ramotowski survived the crash, suffering a broken right leg. But the accident could have



Jim Sloan



Ritchie Miller



A pair of cyclists rides past Sun City West on Grand Avenue. Maricopa County planners are working on an Active Transportation Plan that will focus on bicycles and walkers. [Independent Newsmedia/Rusty Bradshaw]

been worse, according to Maricopa County Sheriff's Office reports.

"Mr. Ramotowski was transported to Abrazo West Valley Hospital, initially believed to have sustained life threatening injuries," Mark Casey, MCSO public infor-

mation director, stated in an email.

Ms. Barnett had dropped her 15-year-old son off at school and was returning home when a cup containing hot coffee tipped over and she reached down to right it. The action resulted in her vehicle

crossing the center line and through the eastbound lane, striking Mr. Ramotowski.

Sun City has few, if any, bicycle trails, forcing riders to share the roadways with vehicles. However, Sun City West does have trails.

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TRANSPORTATION

SCW Foundation ends bus service, better options offered

After nearly a year of serious deliberation, the Sun City West Foundation Board of Directors decided to end its bus service and transfer the program to Northwest Valley Connect and to Valley Metro Dial-A-Ride.

The board believes both providers will bring enhanced service to Sun City West residents. Enhanced services include greater travel distances, flexible scheduling, comfortable passenger vehicles and the option of regularly scheduled group trips to shopping and entertainment venues.

Now in its third year of operation, Northwest Valley Connect, which started through a partnership between Sun Health and Ben-evilla, provides mobility to homebound seniors and those with limiting disabilities.

Its nonprofit call center helps connect people with a variety of transportation providers for trips to the doctor, grocery shopping and to so-



Sun City West Foundation no longer offers transportation services, but foundation officials recommend using Northwest Valley Connect or Valley Metro Dial-A-Ride. [Submitted photo]

cial and religious activities. Calls to this agency more than doubled in 2016 reaching more than 3,500. Three vans are available, one of which is wheelchair accessible.

Kathy Chandler, NWVC executive director, will conduct training classes about transportation options and how to access them 9-10:30 a.m. Friday mornings March 3, 17 and 31 in the Grand Canyon Room at the Sun City West Founda-

IF YOU GO:

What: Transportation options training

When: 9-10:30 a.m. Friday, March 3, 17 and 31

Where: Grand Canyon Room at Sun City West Foundation, 14630 R.H. Johnson Blvd.

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Free rides to and from the classes can be scheduled by calling 623-544-3020. Reservations are required.

Visit www.scwfoundation.org.

SCW street closed, set for expansion

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY WEST — Deer Valley Drive between 135th and 151st avenues will be closed to traffic until the fall.

The road will be rebuilt northward to extend through the Sun City West expansion area.

"We will begin removing the Deer Valley Drive asphalt next week and grading the area for home construction," said Martha Moyer, Del Webb's Sun City West manager of public and community relations.

Moyer urged residents to be "extremely cautious" of the heavy construction equipment moving about the area.

Residents are asked not to walk or ride their bikes in areas under development and to stay on the paved roads.

Del Webb is accelerating development along the old Deer Valley Drive to minimize the impact on homeowners on the other side of the wall, Moyer said.

"We recognize that there will be significant dust and noise generated as we remove the old pavement and mass grade the area," Moyer said.

An extra, full-time water truck has been scheduled. Moyer said Webb will update homeowners about construction plans.

Construction of homes has begun in the expansion area. To date, more than 65 homes have been sold in the new neighborhood, according to Webb officials.

"The beauty of the new golf course, peppered with tall date palm trees, is attracting a lot of interest in the area," said Rich Vandermeer, vice president of sales and marketing.

Del Webb broke ground on the expansion property in August.

When completed, the new area will add more than 6,000 residents to Sun City West.

An 18-hole golf course is under construction, and a new recreation center is planned.



JAROD OPPERMAN/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Linda Rapisarda gets into her cab hired with the Dial-a-Ride service that began in Sun City West on Wednesday.

RIDE

FROM A1

me out a lot until I get my car back," said Rapisarda, who was picked up for her ride to the doctor Friday.

Sun City West passengers will be offered door-to-door service at \$4 per one-way trip. Residents may travel anywhere within the cities included in the Northwest Valley Dial-A-Ride network, including Surprise, Sun City, Sun City West, El Mirage and Youngtown and extended Saturday hours will be of-

ferred for passengers with dialysis and chemotherapy appointments only.

The rides are five days a week, Monday through Friday, with the inclusion of Saturdays for chemotherapy and dialysis patients.

Rapisarda said she will probably use the service more often.

"I'm so glad that they've extended it to Sun City West, because we need good transportation here especially for those who can't get around," she said. "I'm sure that this service will open up so many opportunities for seniors to get around to their appointments."

Dial-a-Ride opens doors in SCW

MITCHELL VANTREASE

DAILY NEWS-SUN

Linda Rapisarda didn't want to miss her doctor's appointment because her car is at a mechanic's shop.

"I was worried that I could get to my doctor, so I decided to call for help," she said Thursday. "And it's very important for me to be on time."

Rapisarda decided to call Valley Metro's Northwest Valley Dial-A-Ride, which expanded Wednesday to Sun City West. The service area had been limited to El Mirage, Surprise, Sun City and Youngtown until this week.

Those eligible to access the Dial-A-Ride service are passengers with ADA certification, any person age 65 or older or any person with a disability.

"I'm very excited and surprised about this new service, and it's going to help

SUN CITY WEST DIAL-A-RIDE KEY FACTS

- Cost: ADA Service, \$2 one way
Non-ADA Service, \$4 one way
- Ride hours: Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. (for dialysis and chemotherapy only)
Service began Wednesday.
- Reservation hours: Monday - Friday, 6 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Reservation phone number: 602-266-8723
- No same-day service. Advance notice is required. Book rides one to three days in advance.
- Rider eligibility: ADA certified, 65 years and older, or passenger with disability. No general public service.

Dial-A-Ride set for SCW expansion

STAFF REPORT

After unexpected hurdles and months of delays, Valley Metro announced Monday that it will begin providing Dial-A-Ride service in Sun City West on Jan. 2.

The one-way fare will be \$4.

Northwest Valley Dial-A-Ride already provides service to Sun City, El Mirage, Surprise, Youngtown and portions of Peoria.

It was in April of this year when Arlene Schenck, Valley Metro mobility services manager, spoke at a meeting of the Transportation Stakeholders Committee at Benevilla in Surprise, where she said she expected the program to roll out in Sun City West on July 1. Later in the year, a January date to start the service was the target.

According to a release from Valley Metro: "When you call to book your trip, you will be put directly in touch with a reservationist who will discuss and assess your travel requirements, then choose from our expanded fleet of vehicles to ensure that your needs are met."

The service is designed to help

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RIDE

FROM A1

"minimize travel stress and provide unprecedented convenience by offering more direct service and fewer shared rides — not to mention a driver who comes directly to your door and escorts you to your vehicle," the release stated.

Those in need of a ride call 602-266-8723 and are put in touch with a reservationist who is trained to discuss and assess your travel needs and provide the right vehicle for you, Valley Metro officials said. Choices include wheelchair-accessible vehicles and a variety of Discount Cab vehicles.

SCW leader decries transit deficiency

NORA AVERY-PAGE
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Northwest Valley residents aren't just underserved by transportation systems, they are unserved, said Bob Gooltz, a director of the Sun City West Foundation.

Gooltz voiced his concerns over the lack of transportation in the Northwest Valley Thursday at a Community Transportation Stakeholders meeting at Benevilla in Surprise.

To him, a bus system would be the ideal solution because not only would it help with transportation needs in the communities, it also could cut down on pollution and asthma cases by reducing traffic, Gooltz said.

Marc Pearsall, a planner for the Maricopa Association of Governments, offered the transportation group an update on the MAG transit study under way by project consultants Moore & Associates, which has a team researching all areas of transportation in the Northwest Valley for the last 25 years.

The purpose of the Northwest Valley Local Transit System Study, Pearsall said, is to determine what types of

transportation is needed and will be most efficient and effective, how to implement that system and the cost of implementation.

Right now, MAG is working to set up dates for public involvement meetings, especially in Sun City and Sun City West, that will allow citizens to voice their opinions.

MAG and the consultant group are also drafting a survey mailer to learn more about residents' needs. The surveys will be customized to each community, because what Glendale needs is different than Sun City West needs, Pearsall said.

Benevilla president Michelle Dionisio told Pearsall that she wants to make sure that a variety of groups are represented in the study.

"You know I'm all about seniors, but I really think we need to include the teens as well," Dionisio said.

Dionisio also said she hopes MAG works with different organizations in an effort to reach homebound seniors or those people with disabilities who may not be able to fill out a survey themselves. As an example, she suggested an

alternate way for blind people to participate in the survey.

Pearsall said he has already been answering many questions from members of Northwest Valley communities, including from one man who was concerned about his 80-year-old father in Sun City who cannot drive anymore.

The man was frustrated that over 50 years after many of these communities were built, transportation solutions are still in the works, Pearsall said, adding that if he is hearing about one situation such as this caller's father, there are thousands more people like him.

Pearsall agreed with Gooltz that a bus system would be the most logical solution to the area transportation woes.

"We've got to have basic critical bus service," Pearsall said, adding that while rail service in the community might be "sexy," it isn't necessary and couldn't function properly without a bus system as support.

But overall, Pearsall said, he is looking forward to the fall when he will be able to talk to more community residents about their thoughts on transportation through the MAG study.

Transportation corridor tops 2012 priority for Surprise officials

ZACH COLICK
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Surprise leaders say an improved transportation corridor will be discussed in earnest next year, though they admit establishing key policy changes is an evolving process.

After hearing from many residents during the election season, Councilman Richard Alton said it will be paramount to discuss establishing more east-west corridors in order for Surprise residents to access Loop 101 and reach their intended destinations.

Residents have long decried the fact that Bell Road and Grand Avenue are the only major arterial roadways to get in and out of Surprise. Despite the progress of Loop 303, its completion will indeed solve congestion but only provide for another north-south corridor that doesn't address quicker access to neighboring Peoria and Glendale.

Alton and others who sought higher office said during multiple debates this summer that Surprise officials are working closely with neighboring municipalities to determine whether Beardsley Road to the north and Peoria Avenue to the south could one day be extended to solve congestion issues on Bell Road and Grand Avenue.

Whether the extension of these roadways is a real possibility in 2012 remains to be seen, but Alton said he believes the City Council needs to start prioritizing

transportation-related enhancements.

Alton said he believes fixing scalloped streets, creating better pavement management protocols and determining which east-west corridors could be a real possibility for extension in 2012 and beyond need to be discussed in earnest during upcoming budget discussions.

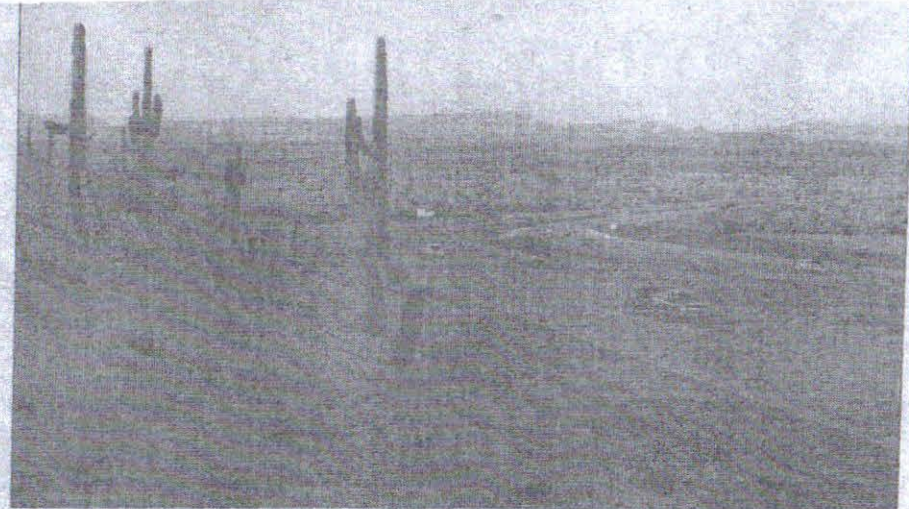
"If we don't get ahead of the curve, we're going to be putting a lot (of money) into resurfacing streets," he said. "We have to start putting money into these areas."

As budget discussions begin for the 2012-13 fiscal year, Alton said a lot of time will be spent on how to put the city's financial house back in order. An audit earlier this year unveiled errors by former city employees who misallocated \$73 million over a 10-year period to construct City Hall and the Surprise Police Department.

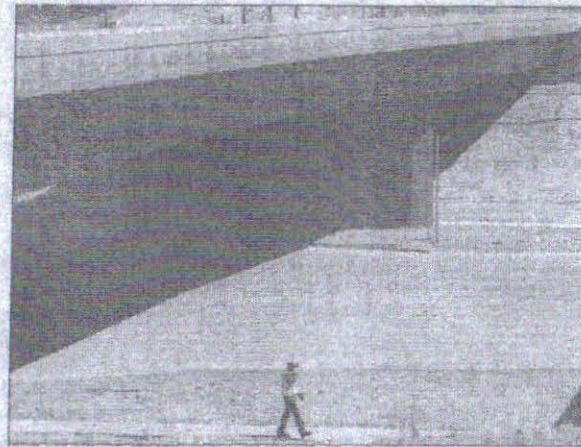
Because city funds were depleted, Surprise has been forced to cut back on capital projects. Alton said swiftly determining how to replenish those funds and prioritizing city spending for 2012 and beyond will allow the city leaders to fund different projects from which the public will benefit.

"For six months, we're going to be actively working on the budget and putting some money toward things that really make sense," he said. "We need to start prioritizing what it is the citizens would like to see get accomplished."

With Northern Arizona University joining the Community



PHOTOS BY NICK COTE/DAILY NEWS-SUN



Above, traffic moves along a completed section of Loop 303 (Bob Stump Memorial Parkway). The new freeway, completed this spring, connects Happy Valley Parkway in Peoria to North Phoenix at Interstate 17. Below, a construction worker walks beneath a new section of Loop 303.

this year, outgoing Mayor Lyn Truitt has said he hopes the successes of 2011 can lead to the establishment of a new brick and mortar college campus in Surprise.

"This is a very good first step," Truitt said of the NAU partnership, noting it was a goal of the strategic plan. The creation of a new college campus would allow high school students the opportunity to stay in Surprise and create new jobs within the community.

Truitt said creating a more professional environment to eliminate hostility among the seven-member

City Council will be paramount to ensuring the public trusts what's taking place at City Hall.

"It's a no brainer," Alton added.

Alton noted there also needs to be greater transparency of city issues during council meetings to earn the public's trust.

"That's the way it should be," he said. "We need open, frank discussions. I think we're going to get there. We are going to get there real soon."

Zach Colick can be reached at 623-876-2522 or zcolick@yourwestvalley.com.

SCAT rejects bid for van in Sun City

By JACQUE PAPPAS
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun Cities Area Transit System (SCAT) board of directors denied a request Wednesday to station a dial-a-ride van in Sun City West on a trial basis.

The Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA) board of directors wrote a letter June 2 requesting that SCAT station one of its vans in the area for a six-month trial period starting in October.

But the SCAT board unanimously voted against assigning one of its eight vehicles to Sun City West, stating the request would cause undue hardship on community residents not participating in the test.

7-21-88 "It was the judgment of the executive committee that it would not be very sound to do this. SCAT has only eight vehicles, and Sun City West passengers traveling within the area only average about six rides per day," SCAT President Chuck McKinnis said. "About 75 percent of the Sun City West total daily ridership have destinations outside of Sun City West. We do not have the funding or vehicles to support this request."

Since SCAT's passenger load is estimated to increase to 60,000 people next year, McKinnis said, stationing a van for Sun City West's exclusive use would put greater pressure on the existing fleet.

But the SCAT board approved

an alternate plan that would require PORA to pay for vehicle and operational funds during a test period.

McKinnis said PORA would have to pay \$13,348 for the six-month period to cover expenses such as liability insurance, driver salary and maintenance.

SCAT sent a letter to the PORA board discussing the alternate plan and reasons the initial request was denied.

"It's a shame that some people are trying to create a rift in the transportation service of this community. What some people don't realize is that SCAT does not have a van stationed anywhere — the vehicles are used for the entire operation and not one area," McKinnis said.

McKinnis said Sun City West donations will provide about \$27,000 to SCAT this year. Those revenues are essentially matched by the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA).

"But the RPTA doesn't match these funds because they are from Sun City West. They match them because just like Sun City funds, they are part of our entire operation," McKinnis said. "Next year Sun City West community financial support for regular SCAT services will have to be larger because of their increasing ridership."

Vice President Dale Shockley said Sun City West has increased its ridership significantly.

He said SCAT ridership has increased by about 1,000 passengers each month.

"It's going to be that we don't know where it's going to stop," Shockley said. "The distribution has changed so we get more riders from Sun City West and some of the fringe areas of Sun City."

In other business, McKinnis discussed some of the short- and long-range plans for SCAT if a second half-cent sales tax is passed next year.

Some of the plans for 1988 to 1990 would be to extend SCAT's evening and morning hours, contract transportation to other Northwest Valley areas and improve dispatch operations,

West

McKinnis said.

Long-range plans would include construction of a fleet fueling and maintenance site, storage yards and office complex.

McKinnis said the organization's compressed natural gas pilot program is still saving SCAT money. He said SCAT saves more than 2 cents per mile using the fuel on seven of their vehicles.

"But the economics is only part of it. The compressed natural gas in vans only pollutes the air one-seventh that it would with gasoline," McKinnis said. "This project will definitely be useful down the line as we find the use of cleaner fuel is more important."

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County nixes SCW crossing repairs

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

2-15-2001

Maricopa County has scrapped plans to renovate the railroad crossing at Meeker Boulevard on the boundary between Sun City West and Surprise.

The county may try to put the project into its five-year roads plan, effectively delaying it for years.

Meeting with local officials Wednesday morning, members of a delegation from the county's Department of Transportation said safety concerns were behind its move.

"We have heard your concerns," said Gary Lasham, highway operations engineer for MCDOT.

Sun City West officials were worried the planned three-week closure of the crossing in April could delay emergency vehicles on the way to Sun Health's Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, potentially resulting in fatalities that might have been prevented.

The Surprise Fire Department station on Reems Road, across the tracks in Surprise, is the closest responder to the hospital.

And Surprise and Sun City West firefighters, paramedics and ambulances often traverse the crossing daily since a mutual-aid pact allows for dispatch of the nearest unit, regardless of town lines.

The project will have to be considered anew, Lasham said, as part of the county's five-year Transportation Improvement Program.

That means it could be as long as six years before the renovations are again on track, he said.

The costs of maintaining traffic through the crossing while repairs are made — as some emergency providers had recommended — pushed the project financing into an elevated category, said Roberta Crowe, a MCDOT spokeswoman. "It can't be done [that way] from routine maintenance funds."

But the work halt at Meeker Boulevard won't alter plans for improvements at 107th Avenue in Sun City, and on Loop 303 near Olive Avenue, MCDOT officials said this morning.

However, the other Sun City West project, at R.H. Johnson Boulevard at the tracks, also has been scrubbed.

The halt to the work came as a surprise and disappointment both to the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association and to officials at Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital.

"We hoped we would be able to work out some way to keep the road

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OVER

Loop 303, 107th Avenue repairs still scheduled

From A1

open for emergency traffic while getting the work done," said Fred Berkenkamp, who heads PORA's transportation committee.

Rob Tuchman, the engineering chief at Sun Health hospitals, also was dismayed.

The project halt means efforts to improve left-turn lanes from Meeker Boulevard onto eastbound Grand Avenue won't take place, he was told.

"We'll keep working on that with you," Tuchman told the MCDOT officials.

Traffic often backs up into through lanes on Meeker Boulevard because there is only one left-turn lane for it. With a \$40-million hospital addition under way, the situation will only get worse, Tuchman said.

PORA also had sent along professional engineer Sam Levy of Sun City West, who spent much of his career working on crossings as a consultant for railroads and at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Chicago.

Levy had devised a plan that might allow emergency use of the crossing while it was under repair. But

MCDOT officials said that if traffic were rerouted to one side of the roadway, "the gates would be in the wrong place and accidents could occur."

It would require a flagman from the railroad plus two deputy sheriffs — three people working simultaneously in shifts 24 hours a day for the three weeks — to properly enforce the 'emergency use only' crossing, they said.

The cost would be prohibitive.

MCDOT, at the urging of Maricopa County Supervisor Jan Brewer, had agreed to work with the railroad in what the county called "a moment of opportunity" to get the work done while the railroad had other work it wanted to do.

But with the higher-cost project not in the five-year plan, funds couldn't legally be spent on what became a capital improvement and not a repair, officials said.

Also attending the session at the MCDOT building on Bell Road in Surprise were Surprise Fire Capt. Wade Rodgers, Sun City West Fire Marshal Jim Heger, and Gil Pantea, representing the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West. Two other MCDOT officials also were on hand.

Bus service puts SCW residents on the road again

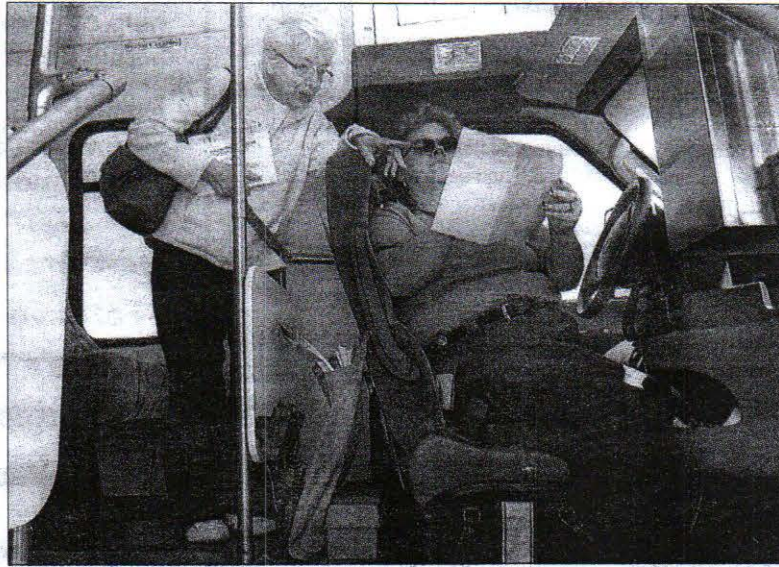
Trip planning affords further opportunities to access Valley sites

ERIN TURNER
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A Valley Metro bus stop in Sun City West has opened up the Valley for people who can't or don't want to drive themselves to a movie at Arrowhead Towne Center or see the sites in Wickenburg.

"We're so excited. We've been trying to get this going for quite some time," said Karen Bertelsen, a director for the Sun City West Foundation, which is the local hub for Valley Metro Route 660. "I think it's been lacking for those of us who are getting older and driving is just not in their future."

Betty Butler lives in Sun City West, and she joined about 70 others Wednesday at the foundation's offices for a meeting where Valley Metro officials presented



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY-NEWS-SUN

Betty Butler of Sun City West reviews the bus schedule with driver Jan Fabrizio for the new Wickenburg Connection, Valley Metro Bus Route 660 that connects the retirement community to Wickenburg and Arrowhead Towne Center in Glendale.

information about the bus route.

"There are a lot of people who can't drive so they're stuck at home," Butler said.

"This releases a lot of people. Now, they can get into Arrowhead and can go wherever their eyes can take them."

The stop was added at the

Sun City West Foundation in early March. While bus operator Jane Fabrizio, one of four who will handle Route 660, said it has been relatively slow in the first month, she expects word-of-mouth to generate interest. And once residents are aware of the service, she expects it to be a hit in the community.

The route travels between Arrowhead Towne Center in Glendale to Wickenburg, Monday through Saturday. The route includes three stops in Wickenburg at West Plaza, the Wickenburg Municipal Complex and Wells Country Store, and stops at the Sun City West Foundation near R.H. Johnson and Stardust boulevards, in Surprise at Bell Road and Village Drive, and at Arrowhead Towne Center, at the North Mall Entrance near AMC Theatres.

And, as Valley Metro Transit Education Supervi-

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BUS SERVICE

FROM A1

sor Dolores Nolan pointed out Wednesday, the stop at Arrowhead is a common one for many other bus routes. That means, with some planning, Sun City West residents will be able to get downtown or to the light rail with as few as one bus change.

"We're very happy to be able to offer those opportunities for shopping, socializing, health care and so much more," she said. "It helps (Sun City West residents) to continue to be independent, and it gives them choices."

And the Sun City West Foundation has joined with Valley Metro to make it even easier for residents who cannot drive to take advantage of the new bus service. The two organizations have agreed to combine fare prices. So, a resident can schedule a pick up at their home from the Foundation bus, which is a \$3 fare. Then, they will be dropped off at the Foundation building where they can board the Valley Metro bus for free. After they return to the Foundation, a Foundation bus will drop them off back at their home, Bertelsen said.

The fares for the Route 660 bus are between \$2 and \$4, one-way, depending on the length of travel. A ride from Arrowhead to Wickenburg will run \$4, while a trip from Sun City West to Arrowhead costs \$2.

While the Foundation bus service within the community requires advance reservation, No-

lan said the Valley Metro Route 660 bus, which has 16 seats and is equipped to handle two wheelchairs, does not. She recommended passengers arrive at the Foundation 10 minutes prior to departure time.

Valley Metro has many discounts and programs for discounted tickets or ticket packages, including Phoenix Suns and Arizona Diamondbacks game tickets being good for free rides on buses.

Discount tickets may be obtained from several grocery chains, or ordered directly from Valley Metro.

For information about fare prices and deals, Route 660, connecting routes or trip planning, call 602-253-5000 or visit www.valleymetro.org.

Traffic signals requested in SCW

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

Sun City West will need a few more traffic signals in the future, according to Property Owners and Residents Association directors.

PORA sent a request Dec. 30 to Maricopa County Planning and Development for three new stop lights in the community. PORA's recommendations include:

- A stop light at 135th Avenue and Stardust Boulevard (now a four-way stop).

- A stop light at 135th Avenue and Meeker Boulevard (traffic on 135th Avenue must stop while cars on Meeker Boulevard do not stop at the intersection).

- A stop light at the intersection of Meeker Boulevard and Aleppo and Trail Ridge drives (now a four-way stop). In the letter PORA directors sent to the county, Bill Fry, 1993 PORA president, cited increased traffic from Grand Avenue to the future post office as the reason for the traffic signal.

The new post office, expected to open in early 1995, is located off Camino del Sol and Meeker Boulevard at 139th Avenue and Sandridge Drive.

- A three-way stop at the intersection of Camino del Sol and Meeker Boulevard (cars traveling on Meeker Boulevard currently do

not have to stop).

In addition to the traffic signals, PORA has recommended the county up the speed limit on Stardust Boulevard from 30 mph to 35 mph.

PORA, a local homeowner's association with 13,200 members, monitors traffic concerns in the community.

Directors wrote to Richard Turner, acting director of Maricopa County Planning and Development, as a result of Del Webb's master plan revision related to its expansion of Sun City West. PORA and the Recreation Centers of Sun City West have been asked for their opinions regarding the expansion.

The company is expanding north on 1,312 acres of land. Because Sun City West is unincorporated, Maricopa County has jurisdiction over development plans in the community.

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved 884 acres of the expansion in June 1993. Plans for 450 acres Del Webb owns will go before the county Planning and Zoning Commission Jan. 20. The 10-member board makes recommendations to the county Board of Supervisors.

Two intersections that PORA directors suggest as sites for signals have had stop signs added within the past three years. The intersection of Aleppo Drive, Trail Ridge Drive and Meeker Boulevard was made into a four-way stop and a stop sign was added at Stardust Boulevard and 135th Avenue, says John Berg, PORA director of planning, zoning and transportation from 1990-92.

"At that time, I realized those were very dangerous crossings," Mr. Berg says.

He attributes the increased traffic flow to the community's growing

population as well as the seasonal influx of residents.

Whether new signals will be installed is up to Maricopa County. The county has jurisdiction over Sun City West streets because the community is unincorporated.

County engineers use standards established by the Federal Highway Administration to determine whether new traffic signals should be added, says Albert Letzkus, traffic engineer for Maricopa County.

Criteria includes traffic volume, accident history and whether the signal will interrupt or facilitate traffic flow.

"If it exceeds the criteria, the engineer should consider a signal, but it doesn't mean it's mandated," Mr. Letzkus says.

A signal doesn't necessarily make an intersection safer, he says. Signals generally tend to increase the number of accidents but decrease the severity.

Trolley car transports SCW visitors

By ROSA De SIMONE
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — A new mode of transportation, reserved for visitors, has come to Sun City West.

An old-fashioned trolley car, minus the tracks, motors around the community, taking visitors on 45-minute tours.

Del Webb Corp.'s "trolley tours" are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.

The trolley's drivers and hostesses are Sun City West residents.

"It was super," said Harlan Lessman, an Iowa resident in town for about a month.

Harlan and his wife, Helen, took the tour Monday afternoon.

"You get to see a lot of what's going on and the length of the tour is just about right," Lessman said.

At the wheel Monday was Fred Kuhne, a nine-year Sun City West resident.

Kuhne squires visitors 3½ days a week.

"It's fun," Kuhne said. "It's as interesting as other things I do in the community."

But fun aside, Kuhne said he takes the responsibility of the passengers' welfare seriously.

"You have to keep your wits about you every single minute," he said.

Golf cars and pedestrians are major hazards drivers need to keep their eyes on, Kuhne said.

The number of visitors using the trolley daily varies, but lately has averaged about 70, said Sue Walker, supervisor of sales administration for Webb.

No matter what the weather's like, we run; even if we have one passenger we run," Kuhne said.

With Kuhne taking care of the driving, "trolley hostess" Louise Takoushian gives the riders useful tidbits.

The trolley, which departs from Webb's sales pavilion at 13323 Meeker Blvd., traverses a route that includes the community's recreation centers, Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, golf courses and shopping district.

"You name it, they've got it," Takoushian told the visitors during the tour.

The free trolley tours will run through March, said Connie Watson, public relations assistant for Webb.

'We wanted for the people who were visiting the model home center to have an opportunity to see more of the community. And it also gives them a chance to see the recreation centers because the trolley stops at each one.'

**Connie Watson
Public relations assistant
Del Webb Corp.**

"We wanted for the people who were visiting the model home center to have an opportunity to see more of the community," Watson said. "And it also gives them a chance to see the recreation centers because the trolley stops at each one."

If demand is high, the tours may continue through Easter weekend, she said.

"We wanted something unique-looking; it's been received very well and people are very complimentary about the tours," Walker said.



Trolley driver Fred Kuhne waits curbside for passengers to gather for a tour of Sun City West. The trolley, which runs Monday through Saturday, takes visitors on a 45-minute tour of the community.

Future roadwork may ease Bell traffic

Thoughts of Grand overpass possible

BY PATRICK O'GRADY

Sluggish travel on Bell Road may provide a little more relief soon and lot of potential in the future.

The extension of Dysart Road north of Bell into the industrial and office complex is tentatively slated for an August start, and the move could allow for Surprise to better coordinate its traffic signals, said City Engineer Bob Maki.

The city also took another step forward earlier this month with the construction contract approval for the right-turn lane for westbound traffic on Bell as it approaches Grand. The long-discussed project is planned to cost about \$356,773.12, with more than \$71,000 of that slated to a contingency. Standard Construction was awarded

the contract.

The turn lane was one of the bevy of projects slated for Surprise's "Building a Better Bell" program that is a three-year plan to overhaul the road to provide significant improvements and ease traffic.

The turn at Grand was a more difficult process to work through for the city as it spent years arranging it with the Arizona Department of Transportation, which controls Grand, and BNSF Railway, for the tracks the turn lane will have to cross over.

The project goes along with the joint city and county project at R.H. Johnson and Bell to add a turn lane and move traffic off the street quicker.

Bell has become increasingly crowded as more subdivisions are opened in

western Surprise. Congestion along the strip east of Grand can back up to 114th Avenue in the evenings as many people use it as a route home.

Surprise officials have sought more ways to get people off the road, and the dual turn lanes, along with one potentially at El Mirage Road, were seen as a way to lessen some of the impact of people looking to head north.

Even with the improvements, the Bell and Grand intersection is one that likely will be headed for failure if nothing is done, Maki said, even though studies in 2000 and 2003 show it to be doing reasonably well.

"These studies consistently show that Bell and Grand is the only intersection that will fail by 2025 if nothing

See *Roadwork*, Page 2



Construction work is ongoing for the right-turn lane at Bell Road and R.H. Johnson in Surprise.

Roadwork, from Page 1

is done," he said.

One solution floated that has met with some resistance is the idea Grand could be an overpass at Bell, similar to what the state has done southeast on the road in Phoenix, Glendale and Peoria. In those cases, however, Grand is at a six-way intersection, while it is only a four-way at Bell.

Maki said there may be funding after

2015 that would allow the city and state to work on an overpass, road studies in the next few years may determine an overpass's fate.

Councilman Cliff Elkins, a one-time lobbyist for transportation issues in Washington, D.C., and a council transportation advocate, said he likes the direction things are heading and to get an overpass he can wait a few years until a study is done.



First riders on the SCW Foundation Minibus are, seated (front l. to r.) Alva Caracci, passenger and Lorraine Cockle, past president of the SCW Foundation Board of Directors. Seated in rear are Joan Viechman (l.) and Virginia Goluszka.

SCW Foundation's minibus service starts operation

By Marie Scotti

The Sun City West Foundation, in partnership with SCAT Dial-A-Ride, purchased a new handicapped-equipped minibus for the exclusive use of SCW residents traveling within Sun City West only. The service began on Valentine's Day.

The SCW Foundation Board of Directors came to the consensus that the community is aging, creating a growing need for additional transportation service within Sun City West.

The purpose for this special minibus is first to reduce the waiting time for pickup and return of residents to their homes, second to financially benefit SCAT.

The Foundation will partially fund the purchase of the van and pay all operating expenses including insurance, driver's salaries, maintenance and fuel costs which will cost the Foundation \$40,000 annually. All income derived from the minibus will be going to SCAT's account.

The special Foundation bus will operate Sunday through

Friday. On Saturdays SCAT will provide its normal operating service.

The minibus will be housed in SCAT's secure garage located in Sun City. Sun City West service will operate based on SCAT's normal operating hours. Residents will continue to call SCAT Dial-A-Ride at 623-977-8363 for service as they have in the past. SCAT will also provide an additional minibus from its fleet (if required) to reduce waiting time. The fee will be \$3 from point of origin to point of destination.

The Foundation wishes to express its appreciation to the SCAT personnel and its Governing Board for assistance and expertise to make this program possible. Watch for the minibus with the Sun City West Foundation logo.

Thursday, February 23, 2006 THE WESTER

SCW grandmother is fined \$500 for golf cart accident

By Randy Altenhoff

It was bound to happen. Residents have been warned not to let their underage children or grandchildren drive their golf carts. The practice has not diminished despite warnings from the Sheriff's Department that, "You will be cited for allowing an unauthorized minor to drive a vehicle on the roadway. This is a misdemeanor citation, resulting in a \$285 fine, and could also result in the suspension of your driving privileges in Arizona, regardless of where you are licensed. Also, if you have an out of state license, your home state will be notified and you could lose your license."

"Further, should the child be involved in an accident, you, and the child's parents, could be subject to a civil lawsuit, as most insurance companies won't cover you if you allow an unlicensed driver to operate the vehicle. Your insurance company could also cancel your policy, causing you to seek insurance elsewhere, at much higher rates."

golf cart.

The child lost control and struck a 1999 Cadillac driven by Dale Kunzelman, also of Sun City West. The cart overturned throwing all three occupants

Copies of this warning are carried by Sun City West Sheriff's Posse patrols and have been given to residents thought to be guilty of allowing unlicensed drivers to drive. The original letter was issued by Administrative Deputy Ron Greth of District #3, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

It was only a matter of time before someone had an accident and a deputy was called and required by law to issue a citation.

According to court records, Odetta Napua Auld-Park of Zinnia, Conn., appeared before Judge Henry in the Surprise Superior Court accused of allowing her six-year-old grandchild of driving a licensed

from the vehicle --- the six-year old, the grandmother seated in the middle and a male 10-year old. Fortunately, the children were unhurt and the grandmother was treated and released from Del Webb Hospital within hours.

Although the charges against Mrs. Napua Auld-Park were a class B felony subject to six months in jail and a \$500 fine, the jail sentence was waived and she was fined \$500 and required to do 28 hours of community service.

As a community newspaper that prefers to publish "good news", we have covered this story with the hopes that citizens will realize motor vehicles are not toys and can be dangerous. Golf carts when operated properly do not offer the safety features of an automobile and therefore require greater caution when operating. Although seat belts are not required to be worn, especially on the golf course, experience has shown they can prevent severe injury on our roadways.

Bell Road improvements to impact SCW

Sun City West residents face an onslaught of construction at their Southwest border starting this summer, but the end result will mean better access into the community.

The City of Surprise has kicked off a \$10 million, five-year improvement project for Bell Road and residents can expect periodic delays as the work progresses.

Although Surprise is handling most of the projects, the Maricopa County Department of Transportation is spearheading a couple of the plans, such as the one that will relocate the Sun City West monument sign at the entrance to the community on R. H. Johnson Boulevard and add a right-hand turn lane at R. H. Johnson and Bell.

The county will give the Recreation Centers of Sun City West \$60,000 to build a new monument

sign or refurbish and relocate the old one at a different location that doesn't interfere with the new lane planned at the north side of Bell. The sign's design will be left to Rec Centers officials.

Moving the sign and constructing the dedicated right-turn lane onto R. H. Johnson from Bell will take about four months, according to Andzej Wojakiewicz with MCDOT. The work originally was scheduled to begin this summer, but delays are pushing the start date to no earlier than this fall. Wojakiewicz said if Surprise officials indicate they want to wait even longer to avoid peak traffic, county officials will not start until summer 2006.

Whenever the construction starts, Wojakiewicz said, residents can be assured the project will leave the R. H. Johnson-Bell intersection open to traffic, although

there may be some lane closures.

The R. H. Johnson intersection project is just one of about 25 in Surprise's "Building a Better Bell" plans. The overall project is expected to be complete by 2008.

Among those that will directly affect Sun City West residents, aside from the one at R. H. Johnson, are resurfacing a nine-mile section of Bell from Avenue of the Arts (114th Avenue) to the Beardsley Canal; upgrading streetlights between 114th and Beardsley Canal; renovating median landscaping and synchronizing signal lights. Those projects are all slated to begin this year.

In the summer of 2006, work is expected to start on the addition of a right-turn lane at El Mirage Road, a project that is being spearheaded by MCDOT. A multitude of other projects starting at various points between this summer and

2009 will have indirect impacts to Sun City West residents as traffic flow on and around Bell improves, but they will primarily benefit Surprise residents. Those include the addition of a right-turn lane at Bell and Grand.

As work progresses on each individual project, Surprise officials will post orange "Building a Better Bell" logos in the work areas to remind residents of the construction and urge them to check out a dedicated web site -- www.bellroadimprovements.com to get the latest information. Area residents without Internet access can get information by calling the Surprise Engineering Department at 623-583-6025. Signs at Bell and Grand Avenue will chart progress on the overall project.

Projects already completed to improve traffic flow on Bell include adding an eastbound left-turn

lane at 115th Avenue and allowing two-way traffic on 115th, easing the use of the Bell and 114th Avenue intersection. The traffic signals on Bell also have been retimed. If needed, a traffic signal will be added at the new 115th and Bell intersection

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

March 2, 2005

Plan: 'Building a Better Bell'

Agreement paves way for improvements

By Matt Loeschman
Independent Newspapers

Expect easier access to Sun City West and fewer backups at R.H. Johnson Boulevard and Bell Road following an intergovernmental agreement between Surprise and Maricopa County.

Surprise City Council voted unanimously Feb. 24 to enter into the agreement with the county to construct a dedicated westbound right-turn lane at the busy intersection, which was good news for Sun City West.

"It was very favorable," said the

community's PORA President Chuck Ullman, who attended the meeting. "A number of people, including myself wrote letters to the mayor and urged her to reconsider."

He said plans were to build the turn lane by fall.

"I'm not sure exactly what went on behind the scenes, but the county came back to us offering to pay two-thirds of the cost," Surprise City Engineer Robert Maki explained. "At the same time, they offered to add 200 more feet to the lane so that drove the price up to \$1.6 million or so."

Under the approved agreement, Surprise will pay \$550,000 — one-third of the total cost of the lane addition. Construction will begin in mid-July and take about four months to complete, Mr. Maki said. The dedicated right-turn lane will measure 550 feet.

As time progressed, the city's portion of the project cost decreased.

First, Surprise council members rejected a proposal asking the city to fund 75 percent of the project.

Then, drafts of the IGA called for Surprise and the county to split

the cost of constructing the turn lane from westbound Bell Road onto R.H. Johnson Boulevard, a main entrance to Sun City West. City Council balked at paying half of the cost and asked for further negotiations.

Finally, city officials accepted a deal last week with Surprise paying one-third of the \$1.6 million price tag.

Funding for the project is programmed into Surprise's 2005-06 budget. The improvements are part of a plan by multiple entities titled "Building a Better Bell."

City Council members firmly

back the project.

"This is one of the things we must do to improve our traffic situation," District 6 Councilman Tom Allen said. "It's worth moving forward and spending the dollars."

District 1 Councilman Cliff Elkins said Sun City West should also step up.

"I do expect we get some equity. When we improve something for us and our neighbors, they should make a financial contribution. This will help both of us, there's no question," Councilman Elkins said. "And hopefully this will expedite other projects."

Mayor Joan Shafer asked the

See **Agreement** — Page 9

Agreement

Continued From Page 1

lane be clearly marked "right turn only."

"It will be signed very well," the city engineer said.

Mr. Maki said city studies indicate 75 to 80 percent of vehicles in Bell Road's far-right westbound lane are using the lane to turn north onto R.H. Johnson Boulevard.

The lane addition will have a major impact on easing traffic snarls, he added.

"This will be a big benefit. We're estimating 900 automobiles during

a peak hour will use the turn lane instead of tying up Bell," Mr. Maki explained. "Motorists will notice a difference."

In the future, more dedicated right-turn lanes are planned for other busy intersections.

"We'll go through the IGA process again for a turn lane at Bell and El Mirage roads.

It's needed almost as badly," Mr. Maki said.

The city engineer said approximately 50 percent of traffic heading west on Bell Road makes a northbound turn at El Mirage Road.

"It's not as high a number as it is at R.H. Johnson," he explained.

Mr. Maki believes the city is getting the most from its \$550,000 investment.

"I'm glad we got what we got," he said.

*News editor Matt Loeschman
can be reached at 972-6101
or mloeschman@newszap.com*

Surprise approves Bell Road turn lane



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

A proposed right-turn lane bound into Sun City West off Bell Road is waiting on approval from the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

PATRICK O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A planned right-turn lane at Bell Road and R.H. Johnson Boulevard got the green light from Surprise as the city agreed to foot about one-third of the project's \$1.5 million cost.

The long-discussed proposal awaits approval from the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, and could start construction as early as this summer, city officials said. Surprise will pay up to \$550,000 of the project.

Once finished, the turn lane along westbound Bell could result in improved traffic on the section of the road between El Mirage and Dysart roads with the ability to get more cars through the intersection, said City Engineer Bob Maki.

Councilors unanimously approved the move, almost a year after the council denied paying \$1.65 million to build a dual lane proposal that would have allowed cars to enter the age-restricted community.

Despite taking nearly a year for approval, the turn lane was hailed as a good step in reducing congestion along a section of Bell Road that has become increasingly packed with cars.

"This is one of the things we can do to immediately improve traffic in Surprise," said Councilman Tom Allen.

A turn lane at the intersection could move as many as 545 cars out of the curb lane to make the turn during peak hours. Maki said he estimates that would make it possible for 900 more cars an hour to get past the signal.

If approved by the county, the project has about a 120-day construction schedule that could start between mid-June and mid-July.

The proposal is different from the one presented last March. There would be only one turn lane but at double the length of the earlier proposal.

See LANE, A5

From A1

The city toyed with the idea of proposing a right-turn lane that went all the way back to El Mirage Road instead of the 550-foot lane in the proposal, but that idea was scrapped, Maki said.

The move will require one wall of the drainage canal on the north side of Bell to be altered. Instead of the angled approach, that side will be filled in to make a 90-degree wall where the lane is added.

As part of the plan, the large entrance sign to Sun City West will either have to

be moved or a new one erected if the relocation is not possible.

Councilman Cliff Elkins, who last year was among those objecting to the city paying the lane's entire bill, said despite his support he was concerned about the equity of use and whether the city or county should pay more.

Surprise was roundly criticized by Sun City West organizations because it would not pay the full amount. Leaders in the Sun City West said they believed Surprise would get as much benefit as Sun City West because it would free up lanes for traffic heading west.

"At times, the criticism gets a little

weary," Elkins said.

The turn lane could be the first of several agreements the city enters into for such lanes along Bell. The westbound section of Bell at El Mirage Road is a likely candidate that has some of the same problems as R.H. Johnson, but that would require a separate agreement with the county, Maki said.

Surprise also is working on an agreement between the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway for a right-turn lane along westbound Bell at Grand Avenue.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2004

Bell Road gridlock takes another turn

Senator searches for solution

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

If the city of Surprise doesn't pony up some funds to add turn lanes on Bell Road, a local senator plans to try to get the money from the Legislature.

Sen. Jack Harper of Surprise, R-District 4, told the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association board members Tuesday he will try to have funds for Bell's expansion included in next year's state budget if the city of Surprise doesn't ante up in the meantime.

"I know the mayor of Surprise can sometimes be difficult," Harper said.

The issue involves the city's March 24 decision not to support Maricopa County's funding plan to build two right-turn lanes along westbound Bell Road to allow easier access to Sun City West via El Mirage Road and R.H. Johnson Boulevard. The road is three lanes with the right-most lane allowing through traffic as well as right turns.

The county had asked Surprise to pay 75 percent of the cost, or \$1.65 million, while it would have paid the remaining 25 percent, or \$550,000.

Surprise Mayor Joan Shafer said she plans to ask county officials if they're willing to go 50-50 on the project.

"That monument (at Sun City West's

entrance) has to be moved, and all that, and that's not cheap," she said.

Harper said it was too late to try to find funds in this year's budget but next year is a possibility if the city and county still haven't worked out a deal.

Shafer said Harper, as a Surprise resident, ought to be glad she looks after the city's best interests.

"If the mayor doesn't stand up for her city and their rights, then she's not a very good mayor," Shafer said. "He lives here so he should be glad he has a mayor who's willing to work hard."

Harper took a dig at Shafer's city when PORA Director Noah Murphy asked whether the state had any right to step in if a city's development was irresponsible or poorly

planned.

"You've got a runaway building program here," Murphy said, asking whether any state law gave the Legislature authority to get involved.

"I know you guys have a hard time getting anything done with Surprise," Harper said. "The more pressure you can put on them, the better."

Harper said one tool cities have to manage growth is the ability to consider areas outside their boundaries in creating their development plans.

"What you're saying is the state as a whole doesn't have that (authority)?" Murphy asked.

"You're right," Harper responded.

Katy O'Grady may be reached at 876-2514 or kogrady@aztrib.com.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

April 30, 2003

Settlement means no Deer Valley offramp

By Anne Brady
Independent Newspapers

Sun City West residents are breathing a collective sigh of relief over the settlement of a lawsuit filed against Maricopa County seeking an offramp from the Loop 303 on to Deer Valley Drive.

"We spoke at the Sun City West Rotary Club (about the settlement) and they were elated," reported Scott Isham, chief of staff for District 4 County Supervisor Max Wilson. "We are just relishing the

victory."

PMI-DVW Real Estate Holdings LLP, which owned 29.19 acres of land at the intersection of the Deer Valley Road alignment and the Loop 303, had sued the county for \$15 million over the Board of Supervisors' decision not to follow through with plans for an offramp.

PMI (Phoenix Metropolitan Investors) alleged not providing freeway access to his property lowered its value and violated an agreement between PMI and the Maricopa County

Department of Transportation

According to the settlement terms, the county will buy the property from PMI for \$2 million. That will bring the total property owned by the county in that area to 153 acres, said Mr. Isham.

The county will likely sell the 153 acres, either as a whole or in pieces, "whatever (way) we're going to get the most money," said Mr. Isham.

Possible uses could include commercial development or assisted living facilities, he

said.

"There's plenty of options," said Mr. Isham. "It will be compatible with Sun City West."

Randy Fuller, president of the Property Owners and Residents Association, said the county has "assured us it will be a compatible use."

"We wouldn't want a chemical plant," he said. "It could be strip mall, storage."

PORA's main concern was that Deer Valley Drive not become "a major thoroughfare," which was anticipated if

the offramp was added, Mr. Fuller said.

He added he "wouldn't be surprised" if Surprise eventually annexed some or all of the county's property just northeast of the city.

"Eventually, yeah, I think we'd like to incorporate it," said Phil Testa, Surprise economic and community development director. "However, it's not a priority right now."

Other parcels currently are

See **Lawsuit** — Page 5

Lawsuit

Continued From Page 1
more appealing annexation targets, he said.

According to PMI partner Bob Semple, PMI had an agreement with MCDOT that would have made the PMI property accessible via both Loop 303 and Deer Valley Drive.

This agreement was reached in 1998, when PMI sold MCDOT land for the purpose of constructing Loop 303, Mr. Semple told the *Independent* in an interview last year.

However, Sun City West residents voted 4,933-1,609 to oppose opening up Deer Valley Drive, which ends west of 155th Avenue.

PMI sued the county in Maricopa County Superior Court in February 2001 for breach of contract, and although the suit originally sought \$15.5 million for damages and attorney's fees, Mr. Semple said last year that what he really wanted was to connect Deer Valley Drive and the Loop 303.

The notice of the lawsuit settlement was filed with the court on March 26, 2003, and the agreement was approved by the Board of Supervisor on April 16.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

TUESDAY, JAN. 28, 2003

RCSCW finds solution to Loop 303 view problem

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

While future noise on Loop 303 remains a concern, the views of the soon-to-be-constructed freeway may become a bit more bearable.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West has accepted Maricopa County Supervisor Max Wilson's proposal to partner in the planting and care of trees along portions of Loop 303, next to the northern section of Sun City West.

RCSCW Senior Environmental Services Manager Todd Patty said the trees will be fast growing and low maintenance.

"It is a tree that does not require a lot of cleanup and care," Patty said. "They have a nice canopy to block the view."

The trees will be spaced

out on a one-mile stretch along the golf course off 151st Drive and Deer Valley Road.

Wilson developed the idea last summer following several meetings with Sun City West groups. The plan calls for the planting of more than 50 mature trees spaced about 50 feet apart along a mile segment of the newly constructed Loop 303 interim roadway next to Sun City West.

Construction of tall sound walls that could also serve as privacy walls along this segment of the Loop 303 were ruled out when both roadway opening and future noise projections conducted by Maricopa County Department of Transportation fell short of mitigation requirements.

Under the plan, the trees will be planted on the Sun

City West side of the line, Patty said. He said the recreation centers are looking at 24-inch block trees that have not matured.

RCSCW General Manager George Grimstad said the trees will solve one concern of residents.

"The noise will not be impacted, but the views will be," he said. "We have asked for a specific tree, and (the county) told us they saw no problem with that."

The partnership calls for MCDOT to spend nearly \$50,000 to cover the cost of purchasing and planting the trees, and installing an irrigation system. RCSCW has agreed to take over watering and long-term maintenance of the trees.

Michael Maresch can be reached at 876-2513 or mmaresch@aztrib.com

DAILY NEWS-SUN

TUESDAY, AUG. 27, 2002

SCW group girds for Loop 303 fight

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

While county officials ponder opening Deer Valley Drive and 159th Avenue in Sun City West, one group plans to do whatever it takes to keep the road closed.

Maricopa County Department of Transportation officials are still reviewing the merits of an \$11.5 million lawsuit filed against them after a purported agreement with a landowner over the opening of the roadway at 159th Avenue and Deer Valley Drive from Loop 303 was canceled more than three years ago.

The land being called into question near where the roads would intersect is owned by PMI-DWV Real

Estate Holdings LLP. PMI's law firm claims \$11.5 million represents the actual damages PMI has so far, but that damages will continue to accrue as a result of MCDOT not complying with its Access Transaction Agreement, thereby affecting PMI's ability to develop or sell the land for commercial or residential purposes. PMI had planned to build a strip mall on its land before the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors ruled there would be no Loop 303 access to its property.

As the county investigates the factual basis for the claim, one Sun City West group that has successfully fought to keep other organizations from coming into the retirement community is gearing up for

another battle.

Marie Verne, a member of Concerned Citizens Group in Sun City West, said county officials promised the group in 1999 there would be no access to Deer Valley Drive, and the group intends to hold them to that.

"It would be a very large fight," she said. "It could result in an awful lot of ruckus."

Verne said residents voiced their opposition in 1999 to the Loop 303 access, and nothing has happened in the last three years to change their stance.

"If we do not want it, they will not open it up," she said. "That's what we were promised."

MCDOT Loop 303

Coordinator Bill Hahn said the department is looking at all aspects of the case as well as options it could pursue. However, he said he could not comment on those options because of the pending lawsuit.

Verne said the landowner may be asking for \$11.5 million, but she doubts the courts will award those type of damages against the county.

And if the county tries to open access to Deer Valley Drive from Loop 303, Verne said it will draw a lot of criticism.

"We will get our group together, and we will fight again," she said. "The people here are very, very upset about this."

Sun City West, she said, is a retirement community,

so having direct access to the community through this roadway could be disastrous.

"We will have nothing but theft and the bad things that go with it," Verne said. "It will be a very big battle if they try to open that road. Whatever it takes, we will do it."

Calls to county attorney Jean Rice, representing MCDOT in the lawsuit, were not returned.

Maricopa County Attorney spokesman Bill FitzGerald said the county is not in a position to comment on a pending lawsuit, adding the lawsuit is "pretty fresh. It could take a long time."

Michael Maresch can be reached at 876-2513 or mmmaresch@aztrib.com.

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, May 22, 2002

RCSCW orders wall dismantled

**CC&R
VIOLATION: 6 feet
exceeds 2-foot
limit**

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

John and Norma Ashworth refuse to obey the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, a centers official said.

The centers has ordered the couple, who live in the 14000 block of Via Manana in Sun City West, to dismantle their recently built brick

wall, saying it violates the community's covenants, conditions and restrictions.

Calls to John and Norma Ashworth were not returned as of this morning. However, when the issue first came to light in early April, they said their attorney advised them to not comment.

The Ashworths' wall is 6 feet tall, but Sun City West's CC&Rs state the maximum height of a block wall cannot exceed 2 feet.

Centers governing board member Tom Cook, chairman of RCSCW's legal affairs

committee, said the Ashworths said they were not going to take down the wall, and that they had hired an attorney to fight any action the centers might pursue.

The refusal resulted in the case being turned over to Cook's committee, which met with an attorney Tuesday morning to discuss what action to take.

"We met with an attorney who specializes in CC&Rs," Cook said, adding RCSCW plans to try to convince the Ashworths to comply with the rules.

Cook, though, was doubtful the Ashworths would comply.

"We have got a letter from their attorney telling us they will not take the wall down," Cook said. He said the legal affairs committee will follow the advice of its attorney.

Cook said the last thing the recreation centers wants to do is pursue legal action against residents.

"I hope we don't have to get into that," he said. Cook said the whole wall does not

have to be taken down because the CC&Rs allow 2-foot tall walls. In addition, a different type of meshing could be added on the wall to complete the fence, Cook said.

"We hope to resolve amicably," he said. "We don't want to get into any big fight over this."

Jean Goncalves, who was one of 33 homeowners who complained to the centers about the wall, said she is pleased the legal affairs committee is working to resolve the issue.

Goncalves, who lives behind the Ashworths'

property, says the courtyard she and her neighbors share is losing some of its beauty because of the wall.

"My husband (John) and I are very pleased the legal affairs committee has taken this action," she said, adding she is not surprised her neighbors are fighting the CC&R rule.

Goncalves said if no action had been taken against the Ashworths, the doors would have been open to others to do whatever they desired.

"The rec board has to take a stand and do this," she said. "We are hoping and praying they are successful."

Michael Mares can be reached at 876-2513 or mmares@aztrib.com.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

MAY 22-28, 2002

Residents petition for a Loop 303 noise wall

By Jeremy Pearlman
Independent Newspapers

A group of Sun City West residents have petitioned the Maricopa County Department of Transportation seeking construction of a sound-abatement wall to protect the community from Loop 303 noise.

In a little over 10 days, Jill Kettela and her neighbors were able to collect 981 signatures from fellow Sun City West residents in an effort to convince MCDOT to address their concerns.

Not contesting the highway in its current location, Mrs. Kettela only wishes to address what she feels is a degradation of her and her neighbor's quality of life if Loop 303 proceeds as planned.

"The desert's been quiet out here, but I'm smart enough to know it wasn't going to stay that way," Mrs. Kettela said.

"I just want MCDOT to realize there were a lot of residents here who are concerned with what's going on outside our walls, not necessarily the road but the noise," Mrs. Kettela continued. "What we're really hoping to do is ask for a meeting with MCDOT to hopefully get



Photo by Jeremy Pearlman/Independent Newspapers

Standing on Loop 303, Jill Kettela points toward Sun City West. Mrs. Kettela is trying to get the Maricopa County Department of Transportation to build a sound wall to protect the community from noise.

our group to work together with them, to work on it."

She also hopes to address any environmental issues and other quality of life issues the highway might bring.

The portion of the Loop 303, which will travel from Grand Avenue, adjacent to the western border of Sun City West, to the El Mirage Road alignment is

slated to open April 2003.

A noise-abatement wall was not planned for this portion of the Loop 303 because MCDOT's studies found that projected noise for the highway did not necessitate it, according to Roberta Crowe, MCDOT spokesperson.

"Our past noise studies indicated that the noise level was

beneath the 64 decibel mark and that's the threshold," Ms. Crowe said. "Anything beyond 64 decibels, noise mitigation would be required."

Ms. Crowe indicated that MCDOT is currently conducting further studies that will incorporate future traffic projections.

In addition, she intends to voice the residents' concerns to the Loop 303 Project Review Committee.

"I'm going to take (the petition) before the project review committee, then we will develop a plan to see what we can do to address their concerns," Ms. Crowe said.

She said the issue will also be raised at a MCDOT meeting next week with Max Wilson, District 4 supervisor.

The Property Owners and Residents Association has also taken action in an effort to have a noise-abatement wall built.

PORA President Randy Fuller has written two letters to MCDOT concerning Loop 303 noise issues.

"Their concern, in my opinion, is very valid and we support (their efforts)," Mr. Fuller said.

Daily News-Sun • Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19, 2002

STUCK in TRAFFIC

GRIDLOCK GUARANTEE:

Neighboring cities increase congestion around Sun City West

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Resident James Kiloh knows traffic congestion in Sun City West will continue to get worse.

"Grand Avenue and Bell Road is ridiculous," he said Thursday afternoon while preparing to leave the Sun City West Safeway parking lot in his golf car. Kiloh said trying to get onto major streets in the community from the side streets is a major challenge now and will only get worse.

"They keep building out there," he said. "It's going to be horrendous. We need another east-west road."

Kiloh said the traffic from the booming communities around Sun City West is a little unsettling so he tries to avoid it.

"I feel more comfortable when I am inside these walls," he said, adding he believes drivers are using the community's side streets to avoid congestion on the main roads.

Kiloh's thoughts reflect those of the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association, which wants to



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Traffic backs up at the intersection of Bell Road and R.H. Johnson Boulevard. Projections Traffic experts predict 35,000 vehicles will pass through this intersection on a daily basis in the year 2040.

find ways to improve current problems and prevent future gridlock predicted in a Maricopa County Department of Transportation study.

The study shows anticipated increases in traffic on major arterial streets in and around Sun City West over the next 38 years.

PORA member Fred Berkenkamp said the county transportation department knows of Sun City West's concerns, but whether it can do anything to calm the problems is questionable.

PORA President Randy Fuller has

sent Tom Buick, MCDOT's transportation director and county engineer, a letter detailing Sun City West's future traffic concerns.

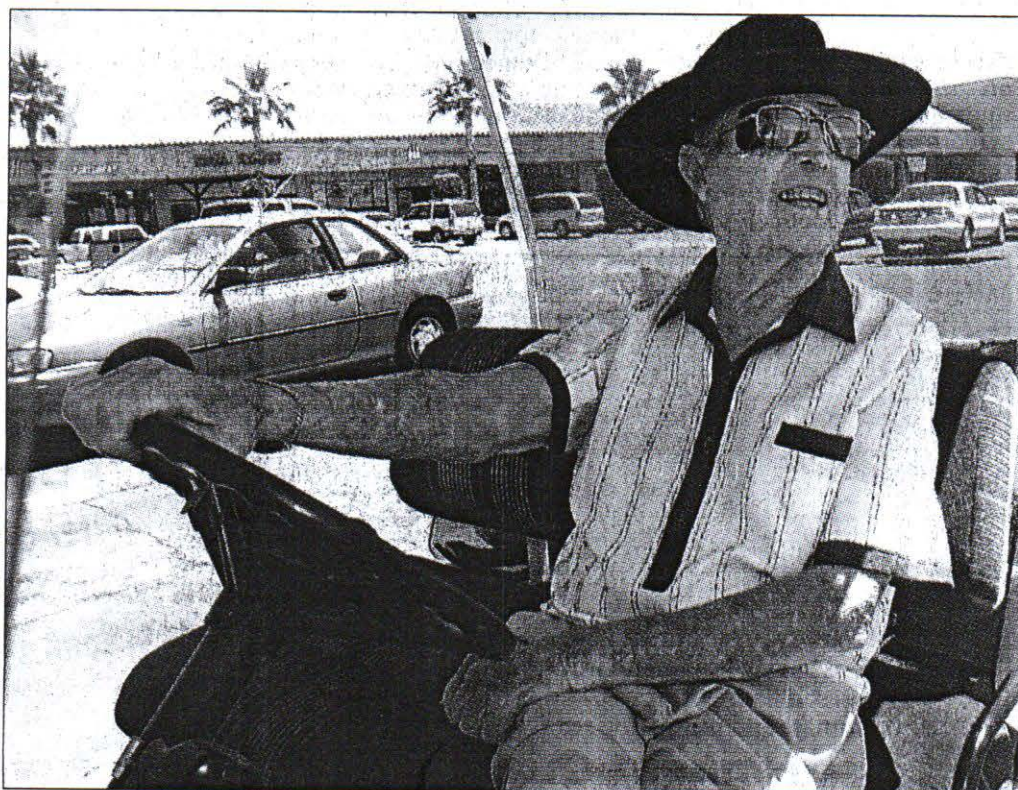
"They know how we feel," Berkenkamp said. PORA expects to meet with MCDOT officials in the next few weeks to address the future traffic issues in further detail.

According to MCDOT's figures, there will be 71,000 cars traveling Loop 303 at the Grand Avenue overpass every day in 2040. Another 64,000 vehicles will travel Loop 303 to the immediate north and east of Sun City West.

The El Mirage Road extension, which MCDOT says is scheduled to be finished in 2004, would carry about 14,000 vehicles daily in 2040.

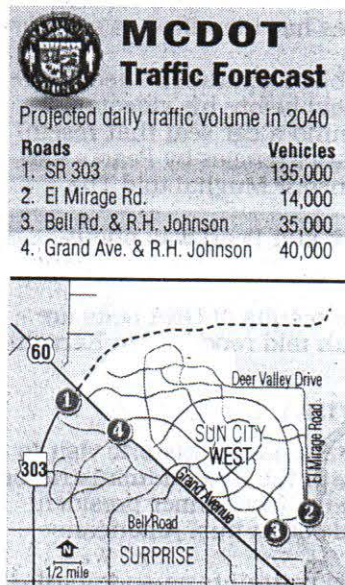
In addition, 35,000 drivers

See Forecasters predict, A6



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

James Kiloh of Sun City West knows traffic congestion in the retirement community will get worse as more people move into neighboring cities.



OVER

From A1

a day in 2040 would be using the major streets of Bell Road and R.H. Johnson Boulevard at the same time 40,000 vehicles are using the arterial street of Grand Avenue near R.H. Johnson Boulevard.

"The aggregate of that is there are 224,000 vehicles a day" on some of the bigger roads in and around Sun City West, Berkenkamp said. "It is a problem."

Most troubling, he said, is the projected increase in truck traffic on Loop 303. MCDOT officials estimate there will be 20 to 24 percent more truck traffic on the state route in the next 38 years.

Another problem that comes with the traffic is the added noise for residents living near the bigger streets. Berkenkamp said PORA believes there should be ways to buffer the sound so nearby

residents are not affected.

"Currently, there are no provisions for walls around Sun City West or by the Grand Avenue overpass," he said. "They have got to do something about the traffic noise and pollution."

As an example, Berkenkamp pointed to the buffer walls on Loop 101, saying there is no reason they can't be added in the far West Valley as well.

Berkenkamp said the

MCDOT figures show there will be four times as many vehicles using the area's bigger roadways in 2040 as there are now. That means the county agency needs to complete some new noise reviews immediately, he said.

"It could have a very adverse effect on our residents and our property values," Berkenkamp said.

Michael Mareşh can be reached at 876-2513 or mmareşh@aztrib.com.

Talking transit

PORA: Sun City West leaders look at transportation service

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City West plans to learn from Sun City's successes and mistakes — at least regarding transportation.

The Property Owners and Residents Association of Sun City West is looking at what kind of transportation services Sun City does and does not have as the newer community reviews what would work for its residents.

"We are 10 years behind Sun City (in age), but it will come," said PORA President Randy Fuller. "We decided we do need to address the future of the transportation issue. We don't want to be behind the power curve. We are going to have to address that."

"Transportation is the biggest concern to Sun City West residents,

and now is the time to work on it," he added.

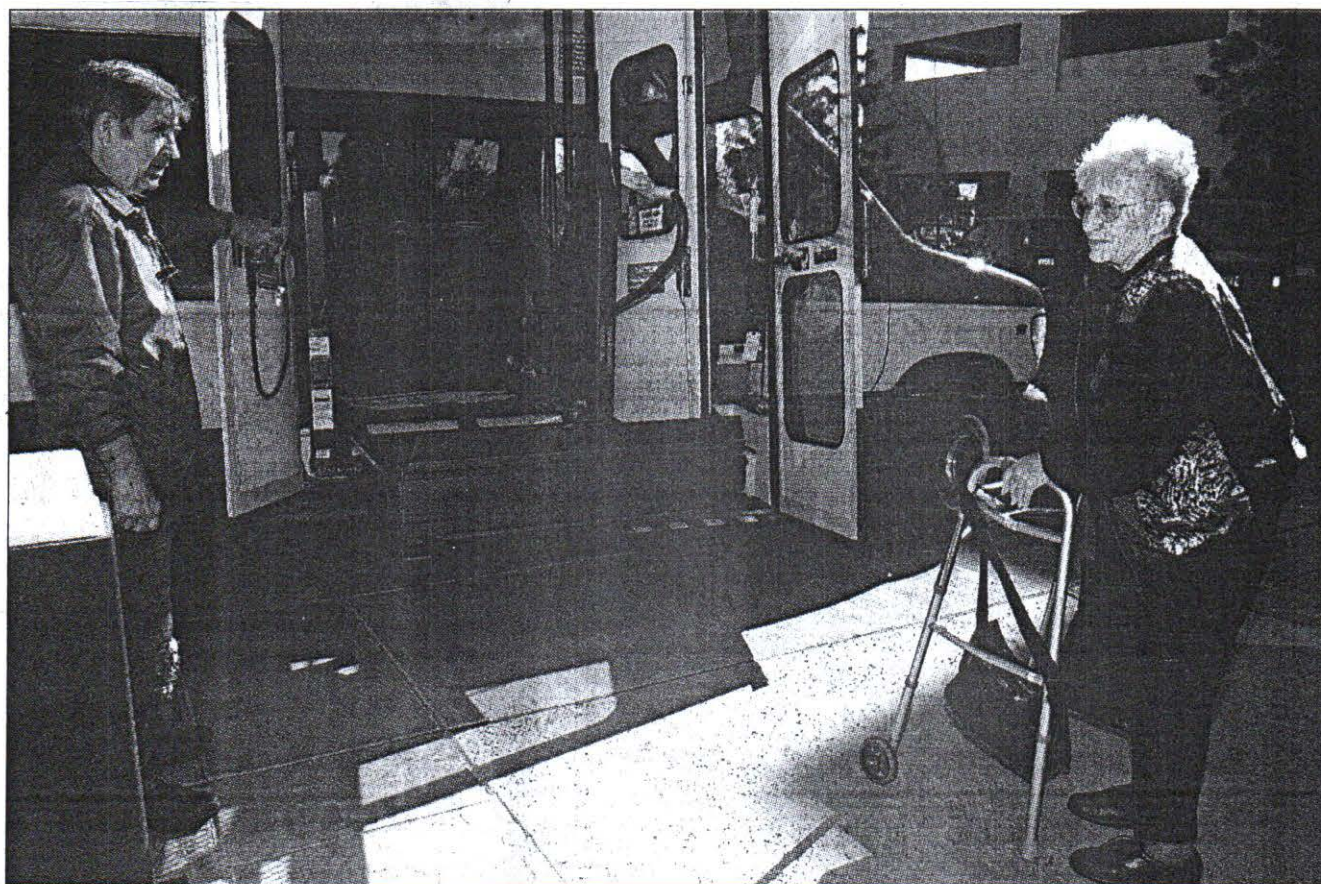
The Sun Cities have two services at the present time, but Sun City West is looking at adding a more extensive service:

According to a report from the Sun City Area Transit, 3,378 Sun City residents pay \$2.50 per ride to take SCAT vans at least once a month.

Sun City West residents, on the other hand, rely more on private vehicles as only 833 riders take the SCAT service on a monthly basis. Sun City has about 38,300 residents while Sun City West has about 26,300, according to the 2000 census.

Red Cross, which provides a Dial-A-Ride service in the Sun Cities, transports about 1,100 passengers every month, with 90 percent of them from Sun City. That service, unlike SCAT, is free, although the organization requests a contribution of \$2 from its riders.

See Red Cross, A5



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Trudy Kaplan of Sun City West, right, prepares to board the SCAT van driven by Don Cheltra Wednesday. Kaplan was being picked up from a medical plaza in Peoria.

OVER

From A1

Red Cross, however, is experiencing a shortage of volunteers and drivers right now, and while most passengers have not been affected yet, that could change.

Anita Gonzales, an area coordinator for Red Cross, said while the service is short on volunteers and drivers, it is trying to maintain its normal level of service. Red Cross has six vans capable of carrying 11 passengers at a time, and Gonzales said it is not uncommon for all these vans to be full. Most of the riders are elderly, she added.

PORA Director Fred Berkenkamp said he would like to see Sun City West create a more extensive service with SCAT than what is offered now, although nothing has been discussed in detail at this time.

"It would be much better to work with someone who has experience," he said.

"The need is not immediate, though there are people who would like to have (something) tomorrow," he added. "It will take time to set it up. We are looking five years in the future for our residents."

The service Berkenkamp envisions would be more of an on-call door-to-door service. "It would be an (additional) charge with added complexity," he said.

Fuller said the reason more Sun City residents than Sun City West residents use the transportation services is because Sun City has more older residents. According to 2000 census numbers, the median age of Sun City residents is 75, while the median age for people in Sun City West is 73.2. The average age in Youngtown is 65.3.

"It would be my opinion that has a distinct barrier,"

he said.

Fuller also said it stands to reason there would be more people using public transportation in Sun City because its community has about 12,000 more residents.

"They are an older, established community," he said. "People over here are more likely to drive."

Fuller also said there aren't as many commercial centers close to Sun City West as there are in Sun City, which means more Sun City West residents have to drive to get to shopping areas.

Sun City West officials know there will be a time when the community will need some type of public transportation, Fuller said.

"We are trying to find some means that are low cost that presently do not exist," he said. PORA looked at the Maine-based Independent Transportation Network, which is a taxi-like service, but decided the plan was too expensive.

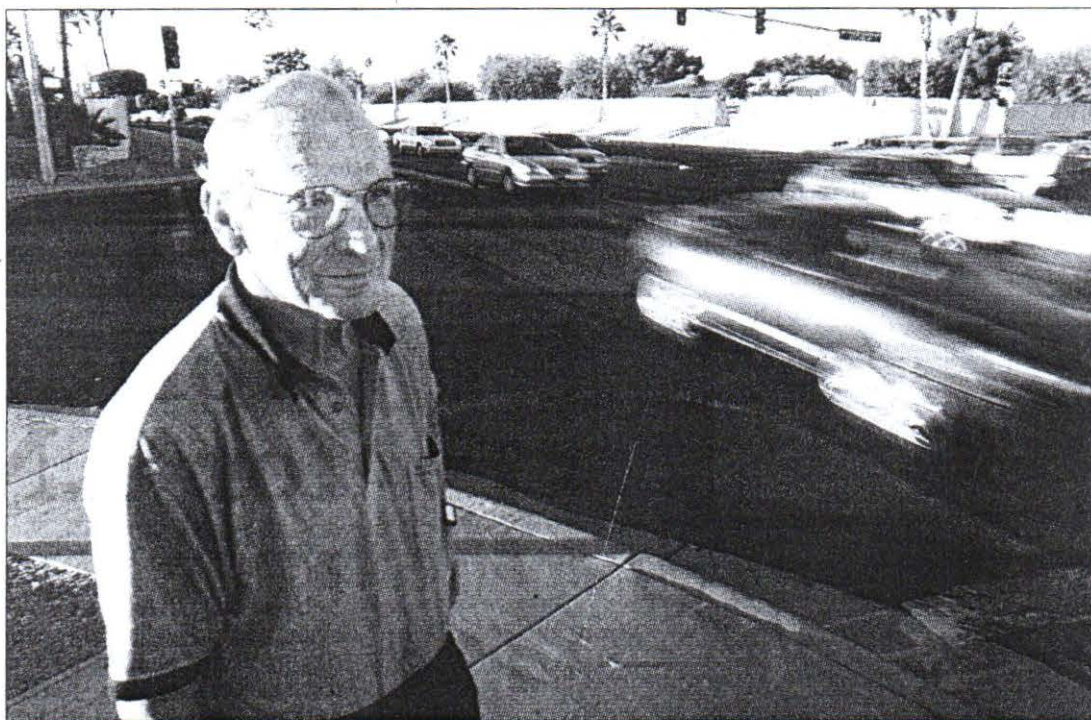
"We need something more readily available," he said. "It is my feeling there is a need for (a taxi service) here."

SCAT Executive Director Tom Profico said the organization's vans sometimes fill up, but that varies from day to day.

SCAT board President James Lackey said because Sun City West is a younger community than Sun City, most of its residents still are able to drive, and therefore are less inclined to take public transportation.

"We have people here in Sun City who moved here 15 years before Sun City West was built," Lackey said.

In the last six months, 20,132 Sun City residents relied on SCAT while 5,189 Sun City West residents took the service at least once a month.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Chuck Ullman, a Property Owners and Residents Association director, watches rush-hour traffic pass through the intersection of R.H. Johnson Boulevard and Spanish Garden Drive.

How fast is too fast?

TRAFFIC DEBATE: PORA
official questions MSCO
policies

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Whether Sun City West has a problem with speeders depends on who you talk to.

Chuck Ullman, a Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association director as well as a Sun City West Posse member, said of the 30,000 residents in Sun City West, he believes 25 to 30 percent speed due to the lack of law enforcement in the community.

But Capt. Ron Stoner, commander of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District III

headquarters in Surprise, begs to differ.

Stoner said studies have shown the average speed on R.H. Johnson Boulevard is 38 mph, which is only three miles more than the posted speed limit.

Ullman said he spoke with Stoner about his concerns, but Stoner said the posse member is misinformed.

"His impression is we don't have full-time patrol there, but he is wrong," Stoner said. "There is always at least one officer in Sun City and one in Sun City West."

Stoner said up to three deputies may be in either community at a certain time if need be.

In addition to differing on what qualifies as

See MCSO policies, A5

OVER

VF

TRAFFIC

SCW

From A1

adequate law enforcement. Ullman and Stoner may have different impressions of what constitutes speeding.

"Five miles over — no one in the world will issue a ticket for that," Stoner said. "We do enforce traffic laws, but it is not a widespread problem."

Ullman, though, maintains there is a speeding problem in Sun City West, and he believes the posse's hands are tied.

"At the present time the posse is not authorized to issue citations," he said. "The presence of the posse is good for the community. We are the eyes and ears for the deputies."

Ullman said he has done the only thing he can do, that is, to inform the sheriff's office he believes there is a speeding problem in the community.

"I get upset when I see residents who are not concerned about our community," he said.

Ullman contends Sun City West residents don't pay attention to the community's lower speed limits because there are no consequences if they break the limits.

Stoner, however, said Ullman is basically asking that radar be used daily in the community, and that's just not possible.

"What I am focusing on is accidents near intersections," Stoner said.

And those accidents, he said, are not caused by residents speeding. The majority of accidents in Sun City West are the result of people

making improper left-hand turns at busy intersections, he said.

"We need officers to stay around intersections rather than have officers stop drivers for driving five to seven miles over the speed limit," he said. "If we did that it would drive us crazy."

A normal traffic stop takes about seven minutes, he said.

Still, Ullman insists that the problem — according to what he's seen in his personal observations and as a posse member — is big enough that something needs to be done.

"They just whiz through here in a 35 mph zone," he said. "What happens is I try to obey the speed limit as close as I can, but in the morning people fly by you."

Stoner said sheriff's deputies will take action if they are convinced there is a problem.

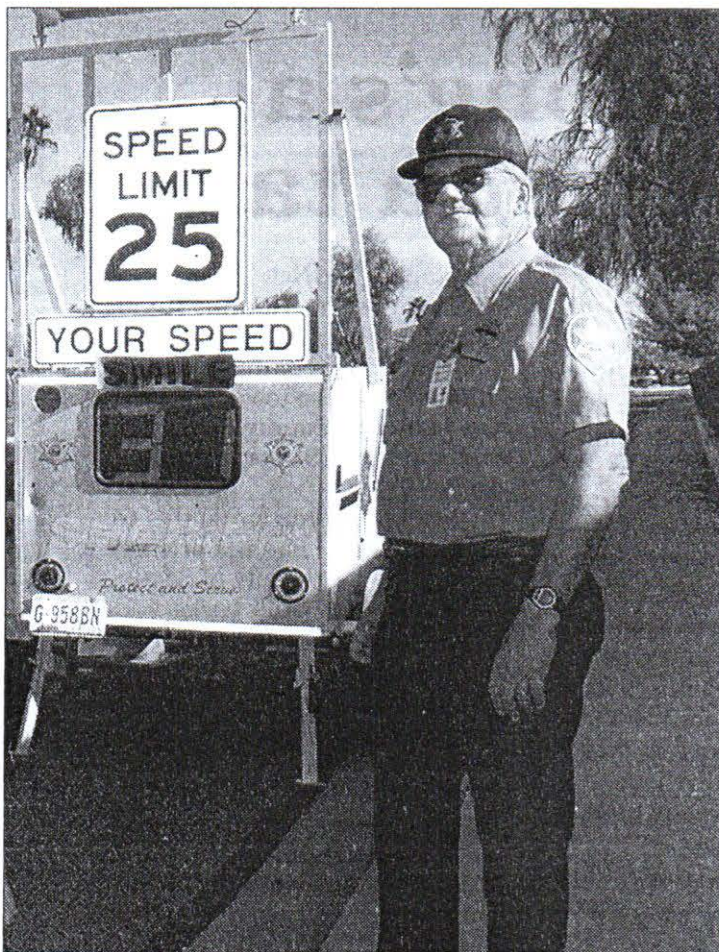
"Just show me a problem and I will have an officer there," he said. But 99 percent of his officers, he said, only issue tickets for drivers who are going 10 mph or more over the speed limit.

"Fifteen over will definitely receive a ticket," he said. "We need to accommodate for speedometer error."

Ullman said accommodating for speedometer error is just one factor.

"People are impatient," he said. "If everybody speeds, you have a tendency to keep up with traffic."

Michael Maresh can be reached at mmaresh@aztrib.com or at 623-876-2513.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Bob Anderson, a radar officer with the Sun City West Posse, checks the speeds of cars traveling on Woodside Drive. Members of the posse can not write speeding tickets.

Commission approves Webb development

Williams Drive limited to use only in emergency situations

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

Del Webb Corp. moved another step closer to increasing its presence in the northwest Valley when it received approval last week for a new housing development adjacent to Sun City West.

The Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously

approved Webb's proposal to build 1,850 single-family homes on 717.5 acre on the former Bodine Orchards property, northwest of Sun City West.

The community will be gated and age-restricted. Amenities will include an 18-hole championship golf course, driving range, practice facility, a fitness center, community center and restaurant.

Density will be similar to Sun

City West, about 2.5 homes per acre.

Upon completion, an estimated 3,515 residents will call Pleasant Valley Country Club home.

The development was approved by the commission with the stipulation that Williams Drive be used only for emergency access. The Property Owners and Residents Association had been seeking

such a stipulation.

Currently, Williams Drive ends at a wall separating Sun City West and the parcel of land to be developed.

"That is exactly what we wanted to happen," said Randy Fuller, PORA president.

Mr. Fuller said he was concerned when "staff attempted to put in a stipulation that if MCDOT, in the future, determined the road should be open

to full access, that would happen."

He was relieved when that staff effort failed.

Del Webb was amenable to the Williams Avenue stipulation, according to John Waldron, Del Webb's regional director of public affairs.

Emergency vehicles would be able to gain access to the devel-

See ■ WEBB, Page 3

opment through the use of a remote control device that would open the Williams Avenue gate.

A minor sticking point remains, but that will not jeopardize the project, Mr. Fuller noted.

PORA is hoping Webb can reach agreement with 32 affected homeowners so the construction of a second wall, around Pleasant Valley Country Club, can be avoided.

The Sun City West homeowners own the wall and nine inches

of dirt on the other side of the wall separating their properties and the proposed subdivision.

Unless Del Webb can reach an agreement with the homeowners, Webb will likely construct a second set of walls to separate the new homes from the walls of the Sun City West homes.

"We pointed out that we were very concerned about the possibility of the second wall going in," Mr. Fuller said. "We don't want to have two walls only 18 inches apart."

Mr. Fuller said he has been informed that Webb has made a new proposal to the homeowners.

"Webb has offered \$500 per owner plus release from liability, as well as release from maintenance on the other side of the wall," Mr. Fuller said. "We hope the homeowners will agree."

The development will try to clear its final hurdle when it goes before the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors in November.

If the project receives approval at that time, Webb expects to break ground at the beginning of 2002, according to Mr. Waldron.

"The current schedule reflects we would start sales in the fall of next year," he said. First residents would move in early in 2003.

Daily News-Sun • Tuesday, April 17, 2001

Repairs back on track

**MEEKER
BOULEVARD: ACC**
orders work on
Sun City West
intersection

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Railroad safety officials at the Arizona Corporation Commission have ordered crossing repairs at the Meeker Boulevard-BNSF rail intersection in Sun City West.

The order came after Sun City West resident Dick Gray complained to the commission that parts of the crossing had loose beams and spikes, jagged bolts and other hazards.

"Personal safety is now involved in addition to

potential property damage" to vehicle suspensions and steering, he said.

Corporation Commission staffers inspected the crossing and issued an order March 27, requiring the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway "to make temporary repairs within five days..."

"Permanent repairs shall be completed within 90 days from the date of notification," the order stated.

It is unclear whether the railroad has made the temporary repairs. Despite a week's worth of telephone messages left with BNSF officials, no one at the railroad returned calls asking for an update.

Permanent repairs for the crossing had been scheduled for early this year by both the railroad and the Maricopa County Department of

Transportation, but those plans were scrubbed two months ago after several community groups in Sun City West objected that the work would close the crossing for three weeks.

That would potentially slow traffic to the emergency facilities at Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, and prevent fire trucks and ambulances from easy access to and from the Surprise fire station a few blocks across Grand Avenue from the hospital, those leaders argued.

MCDOT officials said the cost to keep a lane open through the work area "was too high to be handled as a repair, and pulled the project, saying they would add the work to the county's five-year Transportation Improvement Plan.

That left the railroad unable to do its part of the work, so it's unclear how much the Corporation Commission could order done now.

The Arizona Administrative Code states, "Whenever a highway intersects a railroad track at common grade, the appropriate highway authority shall maintain and keep in repair the roadway approaches to within two feet of the outside of the rail, and the railroad shall maintain the planking or other materials between the rails and for two feet on the outside of the crossing."

The code also states the railroad and the roadway owner shall coordinate their work, but it doesn't specify how that happens, or what happens if one of the two doesn't have the money.

County nixes SCW crossing repairs

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Maricopa County has scrapped plans to renovate the railroad crossing at Meeker Boulevard on the boundary between Sun City West and Surprise.

The county may try to put the project into its five-year roads plan, effectively delaying it for years.

Meeting with local officials Wednesday morning, members of a delegation from the county's Department of Transportation said safety concerns were behind its move.

"We have heard your concerns," said Gary Lasham, highway-operations engineer for MCDOT.

Sun City West officials were worried the planned three-week closure of the crossing in April could delay emergency vehicles on the way to Sun Health's Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, potentially resulting in fatalities that might have been prevented.

The Surprise Fire Department station on Reems Road, across the tracks in Surprise, is the closest responder to the hospital.

And Surprise and Sun City West firefighters, paramedics and ambulances often traverse the crossing daily since a mutual-aid pact allows for dispatch of the nearest unit, regardless of town lines.

The project will have to be considered anew, Lasham said, as part of the county's five-year Transportation Improvement Program.

That means it could be as long as six years before the renovations are again on track, he said.

The costs of maintaining traffic through the crossing while repairs are made — as some emergency providers had recommended — "pushed the project financing into an elevated category," said Roberta Crowe, a MCDOT spokeswoman. "It can't be done (that way) from routine maintenance funds."

But the work halt at Meeker Boulevard won't alter plans for improvements at 107th Avenue in Sun City, and on Loop 303 near Olive Avenue, MCDOT officials said this morning.

However, the other Sun City West project, at R.H. Johnson Boulevard at the tracks, also has been scrubbed.

The halt to the work came as a surprise and disappointment both to the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association and to officials at Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital.

"We hoped we would be able to work out some way to keep the road

Daily News-Sun • Thursday, Feb. 15, 2001

From A1

open for emergency traffic while getting the work done," said Fred Berkenkamp, who heads PORA's transportation committee.

Rob Tuchman, the engineering chief at Sun Health hospitals, also was dismayed.

The project halt means efforts to improve left-turn lanes from Meeker Boulevard onto eastbound Grand Avenue won't take place, he was told.

"We'll keep working on that with you," Tuchman told the MCDOT officials.

Traffic often backs up into through lanes on Meeker Boulevard because there is only one left-turn lane for it. With a \$40-million hospital addition under way, the situation will only get worse, Tuchman said.

PORA also had sent along professional engineer Sam Levy of Sun City West, who spent much of his career working on crossings as a consultant for railroads and at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Chicago.

Levy had devised a plan that might allow emergency use of the crossing while it was under repair. But

MCDOT officials said that if traffic were rerouted to one side of the roadway, "the gates would be in the wrong place and accidents could occur."

It would require a flagman from the railroad plus two deputy sheriffs — three people working simultaneously in shifts 24 hours a day for the three weeks — to properly enforce the 'emergency use only' crossing, they said.

The cost would be prohibitive.

MCDOT, at the urging of Maricopa County Supervisor Jan Brewer, had agreed to work with the railroad in what the county called "a moment of opportunity" to get the work done while the railroad had other work it wanted to do.

But with the higher-cost project not in the five-year plan, funds couldn't legally be spent on what became a capital improvement and not a repair, officials said.

Also attending the session at the MCDOT building on Bell Road in Surprise were Surprise Fire Capt. Wade Rodgers, Sun City West Fire Marshal Jim Heger, and Gil Pantea, representing the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West. Two other MCDOT officials also were on hand.

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2001

SCW residents seek taxi service

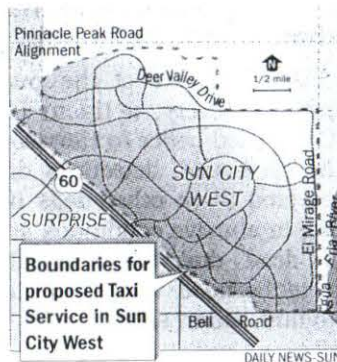
MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Two women in Sun City West are attempting to rally their neighbors in an effort to bring a taxi-like service to their retirement community.

The service would be similar to the Independent Transportation Network, based in Portland, Maine, which is similar to a taxi-cab service.

The funding to the taxi-cab service would initially come from the county, which is similar to how the Portland, Maine, program is subsidized. The cost of rides would depend on the labor market of the community, but in Maine an average one-way trip costs \$6 to \$7.

For two years, Sun City West resident Irma Gawboy, the driving force behind the plan, has been looking at ways to provide better transportation for Sun City West



residents.

During a Maricopa Association of Governments senior-mobility hearing in Sun City West in May, MAG human-services planner Suzanne Quigley mentioned the Maine transportation program.

Gawboy was intrigued and followed up on the program in the following months.

See Community taxi, A5

From A1

A service like this is needed, she said, because the Sun Cities Area Transit service does not fit the needs of many residents. The taxi program would work, she said.

"It fits every type of (transportation) this community needs," she said. "It would be a more efficient way."

If Sun City West was to implement an ITN program, the community would have control over it.

Sun City West resident Colleen Montgomery, 80, said the intriguing part of the ITN plan is the pre-payment

aspect so there is no need for riders to have correct change.

"Most people my age don't have change," she said, adding that she seldom carries money.

For the taxi service to succeed, Gawboy said, it must be locally based so residents will feel invested in it and will work to support it.

"It's up to us to show we need a system like that," she said. "Not enough people know about it. We need to spread the word."

SCAT, while a good mode of transportation for many, is not a viable transportation for some Sun City West

residents, Gawboy said. And because more and more elderly people are turning in their car keys, there needs to be an alternative.

Montgomery said she and many others would be willing to pay more for the added benefits, the most important of which would be no waiting.

"It will be specialized to fit our needs," she said.

Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association officials had discussed the idea, but Gawboy said their idea was to add more vans, which is something she would like to avoid.

"We could have a bunch of

vans, but it doesn't hit the issue," she said.

Buses and vans, she said, are hard on seniors because of the steps needed to board the vehicles as well as the bumpy rides.

"We don't want a van-type situation. We are not going to call SCAT for that," she said. "Let us be subsidized. A lot of people aren't handicapped, and they need this service."

And what better place for a service like this to be started than Sun City West because of the lack of major intersections, Gawboy said.

Her hope is for the service to start off slow with a few

cars, and eventually expanding.

"Why not just do more grassroots?" she said. "We are talking small so (the county) can budget it. We need to convince the county."

Gawboy said if 25 to 50 women can get angry enough to lobby for it, the program may be possible.

"We need the interest and passion for it," she said. "Let's get this started here."

Gawboy is looking for Sun City West residents who want this type of taxi service. Interested individuals may send mail to her at 13618 W. Antelope Dr., Sun City West 85375.

Daily News-Sun • Friday, Oct. 13, 2000

MCDOT closes gap in SCW

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

At long last, a troublesome gap in the west wall of Sun City West may finally be closed.

The Maricopa County Department of Transportation on Thursday issued a permit allowing Del Webb Corp. to install a locked gate at the point where Via Montoya and Sonora Lane intersect.

The gate will block access to the desert beyond and prohibit trucks from using the dirt road there as a short cut from 163rd Avenue to Sun City West.

Webb officials said work would start next week and would include a wall from the existing walls to the gate.

Illegal through traffic, and related joy riding and illegal desert dumping, had long been the bane of homeowners in the area, since it put heavy traffic on two lightly travelled residential streets.

Residents, and particularly those in the Sonoran Homeowners Association, the largest in Sun City West, continually had sought relief.

Association president Kevin Foley could not be reached for

comment this morning.

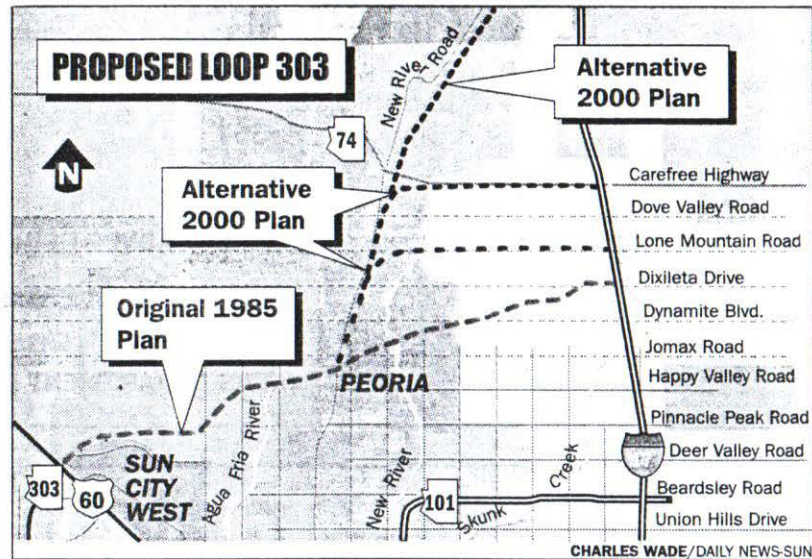
The gap in the wall exists because the area in the desert beyond is landlocked and without other access, and the use of the former alignment of Deer Valley Road is required to remain available.

Webb moved Deer Valley Road and renamed it Deer Valley Drive when it built the expansion area. In announcing the permit for the gate, Maricopa County Supervisor Jan Brewer said that "while we must honor our legal responsibilities (to the desert landowner) we (also) must find a solution to the problem of illegal dumping and illegal trespassing" that the opening has caused.

Officials of MCDOT, Del Webb Corp. and emergency service providers will have keys to the gate, Brewer said.

Because of the need for access, Webb has been unable to build on the two lots at the intersection. If other access later is provided, the developer intends to put homes on the lots.

Last fall, the transportation department posted "No Trucks" signs on the dirt road, and also tried to block access with posts, but to little avail.



Out of loop?

CONCERNS GROW:
West Valley leaders
air objections over
303 plan

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

West Valley mayors, fearful that Phoenix would prefer to see unbuilt portions of Loop 303 moved from their long-planned corridor, are taking their unease to the governor, legislators and anybody else who will listen.

In a strongly worded letter sent to Gov. Jane Dee Hull and dozens of other elected officials, the 12 West Valley mayors said that the route for Loop 303 was decided in a 1985 election and that "a firm promise was made to voters" at that time.

"Any alteration of the approved alignment is a violation of our agreement with Maricopa County residents," the mayors say.

But they provide a carrot for Phoenix, too.

"We recognize the exceptional growth the Northwest Valley has seen and we understand the desire for additional corridors in western Maricopa County," the letter says.

"We would be supportive of supplementary segments, but strongly oppose any change to the voter-approved corridor, such as the New River alignment."

That plan is what Phoenix now is touting, explained Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs. It would shift Loop 303 off the original Dixileta Road alignment, and take it north to Carefree Highway

See Loop plan, A5

From A1

roughly along 99th Avenue, then angle it to the northeast along New River Road to connect with Interstate 17 near Anthem, a large Del Webb Corp. community.

That would leave north Peoria and north Glendale without a limited access east-west roadway on their northern borders.

The letter from the 12 mayors is an indication that West Valley communities are working together to counter the clout in area affairs often held by East Valley cities, said Dave Reuter, spokesman for the city of Surprise.

"Mayor (Joan) Shafer has said that this cooperation will be increasingly important," Reuter said. Shafer was out of town and could not be reached.

Scruggs said Phoenix "is interested in helping development along that I-17 north corridor, at Anthem and at other projects proposed there," such as the new USAA Insurance office complex.

To that end, she said, a coalition of developers, landowners and others active in the area has formed a new group, the North Valley Partnership, which Scruggs said is beginning to act like an official or quasi-official agency, suggesting other routes

and seeking different transportation alternatives.

"They're publishing a newsletter with an offshoot called North Valley Forum and talking about taking a vote on the alignments," Scruggs said.

"But we think the vote has already been taken."

Jim Bourey, executive director of MAG, said his group is studying alternate routes for the completion of Loop 303.

"That's our job under federal and state law as the official planning agency," he said, "and that's what we are doing."

Some results from that study are expected late this year, Bourey said.

But it's unclear if the county needs to follow that recommendation, though not doing so could jeopardize federal funding.

Loop 303 was taken off the state's freeway plan by then-Gov. Fife Symington when funds to build it fell far short. Work has been done under county auspices, but Bourey said the legal steps needed to make the loop a county road have not occurred.

Loop 303 has been completed from near Interstate 10 to Grand Avenue; the link from Grand to Lake Pleasant Road in Peoria is out for bid, with construction to start this year and be completed

by 2002.

Then the road will be connected with I-17, but where that connect will be made is what's now troubling the mayors of Peoria, Glendale, Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage, Gila Bend, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Surprise, Tolleson, Wickenburg and Youngtown, all of whose mayors signed the letters.

Chuck Williams, the community and government relations manager at the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, said that while the route was decided in 1985, no right of way was purchased.

"All we had was a preliminary alignment."

In the intervening 15 years, he said, there have been a lot of changes in that part of the Valley, and MAG, whose responsibility is to coordinate transportation planning in the Valley, now is looking at alternate routes.

One would be along the Lone Mountain Road alignment, another would use the Carefree Highway (State Route 74) right of way, with yet another going along New River Road to I-17.

But, Williams said, a meeting of West Valley mayors six weeks ago decided "they didn't like the fact that MAG was making that analysis." The mayors wanted to

be sure the original plans were followed, he said.

Williams said there has been considerable development along the area where the road originally was planned, suggesting that acquisition costs might now be too high, and that neighbors might not appreciate the construction noise and later heavy traffic.

The exact route of Loop 303 after it reaches Lake Pleasant Road is of little concern to residents in Sun City West, said Phil Garner, president of the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association.

"As long as we can get easily to the Arrowhead Towne Center mall area without needing Bell Road, that's a plus," he said.

Peoria Mayor John Keegan said he thought the MAG study was under way because developers and landowners north of the original proposed route think their properties would be worth more if the road were nearer to their projects.

A spokeswoman for the governor was unable to find the letter in the governor's office and didn't know how Hull would react to it.

A copy sent to Maricopa County Supervisor Jan Brewer hasn't been seen by Brewer either. An aide said the supervisor has been out of town.

Daily News-Sun • Thursday, May 11, 2000

Super objections

SUN CITIANS IRKED:

Loop looms bigger than residents expected

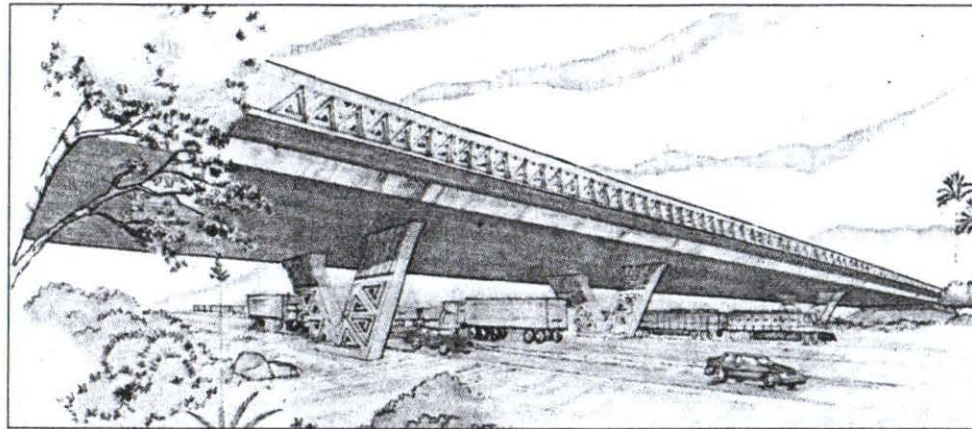
BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Several hundred residents of Sun City Grand and Sun City West showed up Wednesday afternoon for an update on construction plans for Loop 303 and its planned bridge over Grand Avenue.

Many of them didn't like what they heard.

"When I bought, I was not told, not told at all, that they were going to put a superhighway in there," said Bill Waters, who lives in Sun City Grand, a few blocks from Loop 303. "And I never would have bought my house if they had told me."

"Me either," said David Goodwin, a



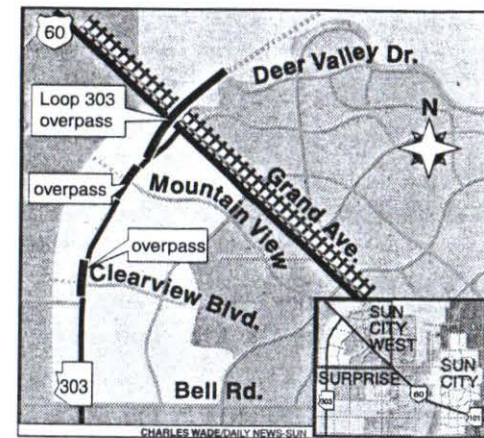
SUBMITTED DRAWING

Plans for a Grand Avenue bridge and two overpasses — at Clearview and Mountain View boulevards in Surprise — concern nearby residents.

retired electrician from Chicago who said he lives about two blocks from the loop.

"We knew there was a road there, but it was light traffic on it. Now it's much

worse, with trucks making a lot of noise at night," Goodwin said, inviting officials of the county transportation department and people from Del Webb Corp. to



spend an hour, or the night, at his home.

Waters and Goodwin were two among many who argued they never were told how big the loop would become and how much truck traffic it would accommodate.

Current plans call for bid openings July 12 for construction of the \$11 million Grand Avenue bridge and two overpasses — at Clearview and Mountain View boulevards in Surprise — that

See Plans for, A5

OVER

From A1

would carry traffic to the upcoming west portion of Sun City Grand.

The roadway between those two overpasses would be depressed 7 feet below the ground in an effort to quiet noise. It would remain two lanes.

After the road passes the Mountain View overpass heading north, it would widen to four lanes on the approach to the Grand Avenue bridge.

It also will remain four lanes past Sun City West, to the planned intersection with a future El Mirage Road.

In Surprise, rather than curve to the east as it does now to join Grand Avenue, the loop would continue straight north toward its bridged crossing of Grand and the railroad.

The existing Loop 303 pavement will become the exit ramp from the loop and will stay about where it is to connect to Grand Avenue where a signal will be installed.

Construction of the Grand Avenue overpass, depressed Surprise portions of Loop 303, and the overpasses there, should start in September.

Del Webb Corp. is paying the bulk of the cost for the two overpasses in Sun City Grand.

When they are completed, traffic will be able to cross to the planned portions of the community but will not have access to and from the loop.

That access will be solely at Bell Road or Grand Avenue.

The work, including the Grand Avenue overpass, should be finished by late summer 2001, according to materials distributed at the meeting.

Loop 303, now a two-lane road in the midst of an expanding Sun City Grand, was paved and in use before the Webb company ever started construction.

And plans always have called for it eventually to be widened as traffic needs increased, MCDOT officials say.

Handouts distributed Wednesday recited the roadway's history

and also included the notation that since the road was present before home construction began, it is the developer's responsibility to provide for soundproofing, not the county's.

In Sun City West, also developed by Webb, that soundproofing wall, on a tall embankment, already is in place.

Sun City Grand residents are concerned that the road, which will remain two lanes for now in their community, would soon become four and even six lanes, particularly if it is designated as the Canamex highway, part of an interstate system intended to accommodate truck traffic from Canada to Mexico.

That route largely already has been designated from the border at Nogales north to Canada, but so far no decision has been made on the route through or around Phoenix.

Recommendations will soon be made by the Maricopa Association of Governments, with Surprise officials dead set against the route running through their community.

Surprise Mayor Joan Shafer serves on a committee that will help make the choice, and has pledged to residents that she'll fight against Loop 303 becoming that route.

Max Ratermann, a consultant on bridge construction, said that traffic on Grand Avenue (U.S. 60) would be largely unaffected by the bridge construction, with work done from platforms or scaffolding.

Ratermann, who manned one of the several explanation points, said residents seemed concerned principally about the Canamex designation, and about truck noise.

"I'd say they're equally worried about what the road will become in the long-term as it's widened, and the immediate effects in the next year or so," he said.

Not exactly easy street

HAOS: New striping causes confusion on Sun City West street

GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN
DAILY NEWS-SUN

What was supposed to make things simpler and safer for golf car and regular vehicle drivers along Granite Valley Drive in Sun City West has created confusion among motorists who use the neighborhood street.

Officials with the Property Owners and Residents Association and the Maricopa County Department of Transportation are working to clear things up.

What was once a two-lane road now has a center turn lane, a regular through lane in each direction and a 7-foot golf car and bicycle lane on the right in both directions. Parking in the golf car lanes is prohibited. The idea for the

road striping came from a previous project on 103rd Avenue in Sun City, MCDOT officials said.

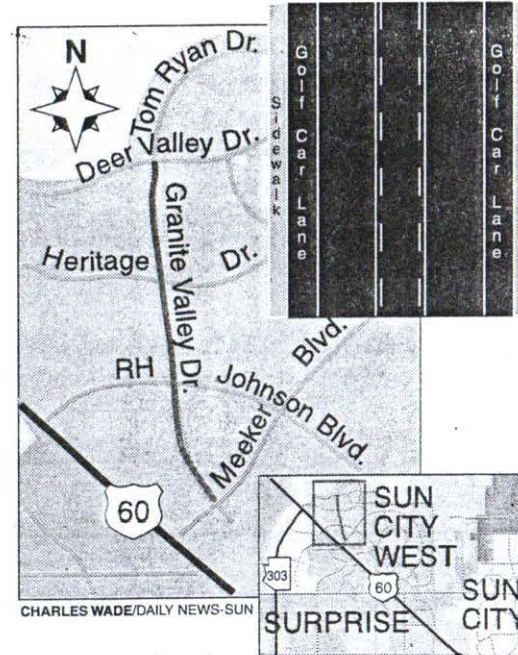
"That previous project was very successful, and we were hoping to do the same with that road (Granite Valley Drive)," said Roberta Crowe, MCDOT spokeswoman. "It's still a work in progress."

But with the lack of traffic signs posted along the road to tell drivers what the lanes should be used for, chaos has set in.

Jack Lewis, who lives just around the corner, said he's seen plenty of close calls since Granite Valley Drive was restriped.

"It's complete total chaos," Lewis said. "It's really dangerous."

Some people are driving their golf cars in the right side lanes, but others are treating them as strictly emergency lanes, Lewis said. He said regular vehicles are also crossing into the center turn lane to pass golf cars that are



See Street's striping, A5

From A1

reluctant to use the golf car lane.

"Street markings or signs would help," Lewis said.

John and Jere Viberg also live near Granite Valley Drive and were happy to see the extra lane painted on the road. The couple are avid bikers and like the protection that the extra lane offers them from regular traffic.

"The lane has eliminated people passing on the right," John Viberg said. "When we saw it, we thought 'gee, what a good idea.'"

The Vibergs said road signs or symbols on the road would make

it easier for drivers to understand the extra lane's intended use.

Bob Garrett, transportation and safety chairman for PORA, said PORA officials will discuss ways to spread the word on the new road striping at a meeting today.

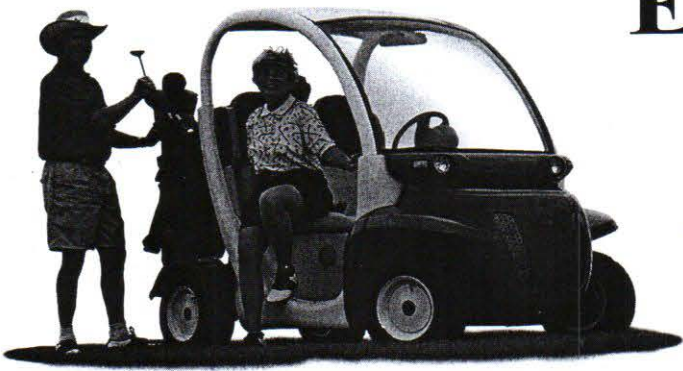
Crowe said MCDOT is working to install no parking signs and two-way left turn signs along Granite Valley Drive. She said MCDOT doesn't install golf car lane signs.

Reporter Ginger Scott-Eiden can be reached by e-mail at Ginger.Scott-Eiden@thomnews.com or by calling 876-2522.

Electric Or Gas, Today's Edition Is *Not* 'Your Grandpa's Golf Cart'

by Dick Kemp

SUN LIFE April 2000



While Del Webb was building Sun City's 11 golf courses, area golf cart sales spiked upward. Of course, it helped that thousands of active Sun Citians found multiple uses for the versatile vehicles, which in 1960 sold for about \$650.

Today, there's another golf cart revolution going on, led by new Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) specifications, Federal and Arizona tax breaks, and communities like Sun City Grand.

While Sun City Grand allows only electrical carts on its three golf courses, many area residents don't need a push.

Dick Marvin has "driven electric" since he moved to Sun City West in 1979, including a showpiece Model T body he mounted on a cart frame in the early 1980s. He and wife Doris log about 1,000 miles a year, and recently bought a new Western golf car.

"Electric is quiet, doesn't smell and doesn't pollute. And I'm

taking advantage of federal and Arizona tax breaks," says Dick.

Joe and Marion Miller of Sun City West have driven about 1,400 miles in the nine months since they bought a new "look" Global Electric MotorCar (GEM).

"We use it to shop and visit friends. Our grandchildren love to drive it," says Joe. "It corners like a sports car. And we'll take both tax breaks."

\$10,000 tax deduction

To qualify for Arizona's \$10,000 tax deduction, which

can be spread over five years, a new cart must produce zero emissions.

Further NEV requirements include the power to travel at least 20 miles per hour (25 mph max), plus safety glass windshield, seatbelts, a horn, headlight and taillights.

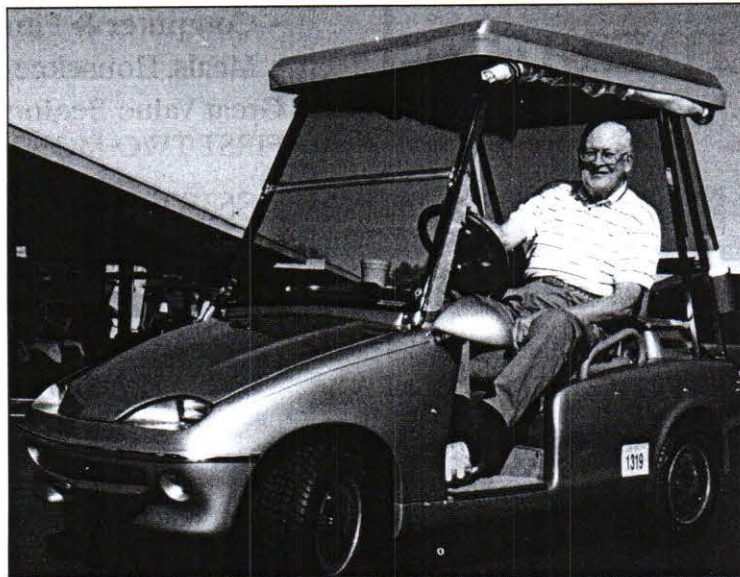
Gas-powered carts have been the standard for years, locally and nationally. Today, a major Sun Cities dealer says that prior to NEV requirements and tax breaks, 90 percent of his sales were gas models. Today, it's about 50-50.

Another dealer handling a relatively new electric model, but also two gas lines, says 60 percent of his total sales are electric-powered and moving higher.

The same NEV rules are required for a one-time federal tax deduction of 10 percent of a cart's purchase price.

Golf cart price range

With new government standards, and available upgrades, prices on golf carts in



LONG AN ADVOCATE of electric golf cars, Dick Marvin, a resident of Grandview Terrace in Sun City West, expects to log 1,000 miles a year on his new model.

OVER

HAPPY WITH THEIR "new look" in electric cars, Joe and Marion Miller of Sun City West drove 1,400 miles in only nine months.

the Sun Cities area today range from about \$4,000 to \$19,000.

Operating cost estimates vary from one to four cents per mile, with the electric model getting the consensus edge among the three Sun Cities dealers we talked to.

And while no statistics are available, these dealers estimate from 40 to 50 percent of Sun Cities households own a golf cart.

Golf cart stories abound

Purchase and operating costs aside, *Sun Life* readers will con-



tinue to buy carts for golf, for fun and for many other reasons. And golf cart stories will continue to circulate.

Early in Sun City's history, the story was legend about the golfer

who hurriedly parked on a hillside and quickly grabbed his putter to join his buddies, only to turn and watch in horror as his cart and clubs rolled into a downhill lake and disappeared

beneath the water.

Since then, golf cart anecdotes could fill a book.

Once a customer took delivery on a new model with so many "bells and whistles" that he drove the cart back to the dealer and confessed he was afraid to touch many of the shiny buttons.

"What's that one?" he pointed, and asked. "The horn," replied his salesman.

Another story involves a cart used to move decorative rocks around a yard. Stacked on the passenger's side, a "small boulder" rolled onto the gas pedal, depressing it to the floorboard.

Before the startled driver could dislodge the rock, the cart burst through a garage wall and came to rest in a laundry room.

New uses will be found

New uses will continue to be found for locally sold carts, one of which now tows gliders at the airfield near Lake Pleasant.

Sometimes it's a lot more fun and convenient to hop in a golf cart. Even though he has two cars in his garage, Ken Gablin of Sun City enjoys logging about 2,500 miles a year commuting to his rec center and nearest stores in his year-old GEM.

Those driving an older model and thinking "upgrade," and the many who still visualize a golf cart as transportation stripped to the bone, will be amazed at what's available.

On one local electric model, built for two or four passengers, the following equipment is standard:

Front-wheel drive, four-wheel hydraulic brakes, safety glass windshield with wiper, three-point anchored seat belts, head-

lights, brake lights and back-up alarm, turn signals and adjustable rear view mirror.

Average mileage for a six-eight hour charge is 20-25 miles. For the electric model cited above, average is 40 miles per charge. And an eight-minute charger is available.

Maybe largest cart parade?

A *Guinness Book* record for the largest decorated golf cart parade ever staged may be set in Sun City on April 1, about the time you receive this issue.

If for no other reason, a review of this parade line would provide proof that, like Sun City, golf carts in 40 years have come a long way.

RR crossing upgrades delayed

Work was scheduled to start this week

By DAVID S. GOODMAN
Independent Newspapers

Plans for road improvements at four northwest Valley railroad crossings, scheduled to begin Jan. 15, were abruptly put on hold late last week.

Improvement to the 107th and Grand avenues railroad crossing was to have been a joint project of the Arizona Department of Transportation, Maricopa County Department of Transportation and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe

Railway. The other three crossings were to be upgraded entirely by MCDOT.

The first closure was scheduled for Jan. 8 at Grand and 107th avenues, in Sun City. Future closures were to include the intersections of Meeker Boulevard and Grand Avenue, R.H. Johnson Boulevard and Grand Avenue and Loop 303 and Olive Avenue.

Construction at all four sites involves making roadways flush with the railroad track.

According to MCDOT,

Burlington Northern Santa Fe requested the work be postponed indefinitely until new concerns could be addressed.

All four closures were initiated by BNSF to make repairs to the railroad, MCDOT then joined the project to address the uneven approaches to the tracks.

"We are in the process of setting up meetings with BNSF Railroad officials to iron out any new concerns so that the project can contin-

See ■ CROSSINGS, Page 5

ue to move forward," said MCDOT Project Manager Bill Grimes.

One primary concern came from Del Webb Memorial Hospital. Closure of Meeker Boulevard was scheduled for Feb. 26 through March 18. Meeker provides easy access to Del Webb for emergency vehicles and construction crews working on expansion of the hospital.

"It would close off our easiest access for everybody on the other side of Grand Avenue," said Rob Tuckman, vice president of corporate engineering for Sun Health.

"I need to spend more time thinking through an alternate plan, but my first reaction is I would be completely opposed to closing that down as a matter of safety and getting people to and from the hospital," Mr. Tuckman said.

One alternative he offered would be to keep one lane open or have a crossing for emergency vehicles, but no plans have been finalized.

"I offered to sit down with them and they seemed receptive so we'll put our heads together and see what kind of plan we can come up with," Mr. Tuckman said.

The Surprise Fire Department also saw the Meeker closure as a problem.

"It would delay us (in getting emergency vehicles to the hospital)," said Surprise Fire Chief John Walter.

Even though a closure could cause delays, Chief Walter said repairs are necessary.

"It beats our trucks to death when we go over that intersection and the one at Greenway," he said.

A closure at Loop 303 and Olive Avenue would require closing the freeway for three weeks. Railroad tracks at this intersection cross Loop 303 and are deteriorating

from heavy traffic.

With more construction that was planned at R.H. Johnson, Property Owners and Residents Association of Sun City West has become involved in the process.

"There's a lot of pre-planning and communication that's going to need to be done," said Fred Berkenkamp, director of roads, traffic and traffic safety. "We feel that our key role is to anticipate adverse consequences."

No traffic would have been affected traveling on Grand. The closures would occur on the roads crossing Grand and would last for approximately three weeks at each location.

When construction begins additional work was scheduled for the Grand and 107th intersection.

"MCDOT is partnering with Arizona Department of Transportation and will be installing 150 feet of new sidewalk and ADA ramps over the railroad tracks and on the northwest and southwest corners of the Grand Avenue and 107th Avenue intersection to help improve the safety of pedestrians," said Maricopa County District 4 Supervisor Jan Brewer, who serves the Sun Cities.

Although construction may cause confusion and frustration for drivers, Sun City is looking forward to a smoother crossing.

"They're terrible and 107th is real bad," said Ed McCrea, president of the Sun City Home Owners Association.

However, like other intersections, there was concern about the

closure. Along with impacting traffic it could delay response time for the Sun City Fire District, especially emergency vehicles trying to reach Boswell Memorial Hospital.

"What is of a main concern is that it will affect some responses for medical calls because that's taking away one of the arteries that go into the (Boswell) hospital," said Assistant Fire Chief Steve Morrow.

Closing 107th Avenue will force additional traffic on to 103rd and 111th avenues.

Assistant Chief Morrow said it could cause a small delay but it would not impact immediate service delivery for medical or fire.

"If you can take an alternative route at a different time of the day you can probably get through there a lot better," Mr. Morrow said.

Announcement of the delay in the project disappointed Mr. McCrea and Gerry Unger, chairman of HOA's Transportation Committee.

"We have been waiting a long time for this and to have it get so close and have it postponed is disappointing," Mr. Unger said. He was worked for years to have a sidewalk installed to cross the railroad tracks along Grand Avenue.

Detours are no longer in the immediate future for the northwest Valley but residents can expect those closures to happen once all concerns have been addressed.



Photo by DAVID GOODMAN/Independent Newspapers

The railroad crossing at Meeker Boulevard and Grand Avenue in Sun City West was one of four scheduled for improvements.

Loop 101 link hits roadblock

SCW voters give thumbs down to Deer Valley connection

By BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

By a tally of more than 3-1, residents of Sun City West have asked that Deer Valley Drive not be connected to intended Loop 303.

In voting on Friday, and early balloting Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, residents overwhelmingly rejected the idea of the connection, 4,933 to 1,609.

"The people have spoken clearly and loudly, and we will respect their wishes," said District 4 County Supervisor Jan Brewer, who arranged for the vote to gauge feeling on the planned connection.

"There will be no connection," Brewer said late Friday. "I promised to respect the wishes of the community, and we will do that."

With 6,542 votes cast, the number voting in this election was more than double those who voted in the last election for governing board directors

of the Sun City West Recreation Centers.

So many people turned out to vote Friday that Recreation Centers staffers twice were sent to the copying machines to grind out more ballots, said Dee Hjermstad, the board member who heads the Public Relations Committee and supervised the process.

For a time, with no ballots available and long lines, voters were allowed to use blank pieces of paper, writing "yes" or "no" on them. Those votes were counted along with the tally on official ballots.

It took the Rec Board members and a few volunteers about two hours to complete the count, first separating the mountain of ballots into piles of Yes and No, then double counting each stack and tallying the results.

Green sheets of paper with the final totals were available about 4 p.m., two hours after the polls in the R.H.

Johnson Social Hall closed at 2 p.m.

Those sheets were posted at several points in the community to make residents aware of the outcome.

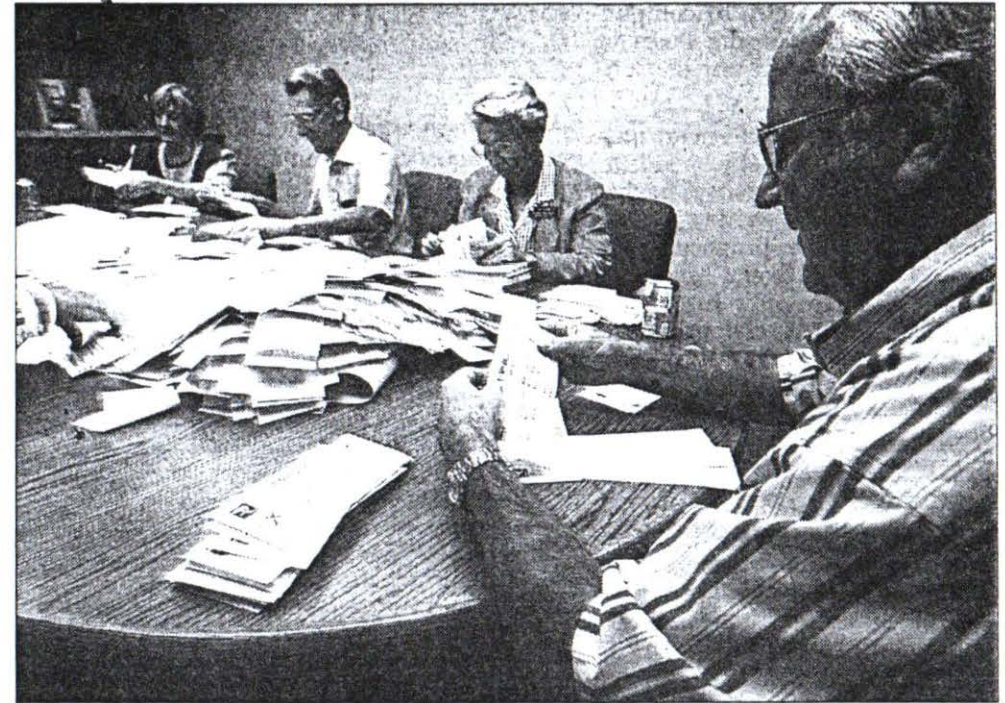
Doris Rettger was the last to vote, dropping her ballot into the big wooden box about a minute before it was taken away for counting. "I got the very last ballot they had," she said.

Although recreation cards were technically required to vote, at the end, with about 100 people still in line, elections officials simply looked at the cards and handed out ballots, not checking against the printed list of card holders.

And some residents turned up long after polls had closed, thinking the election hours ran until 6 p.m., a time that was erroneously reported in a local weekly publication.

Interest in the balloting was high

See Voters scrap, A5



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Governing board members of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West sort ballots on the referendum regarding the future Loop 303/Deer Valley Drive interchange Friday.

From A1

even in the early going, with more than 500 ballots cast between 6 and 9 p.m. Wednesday when polls were opened in the Property Owners and Residents Association office to allow those who work days to vote early.

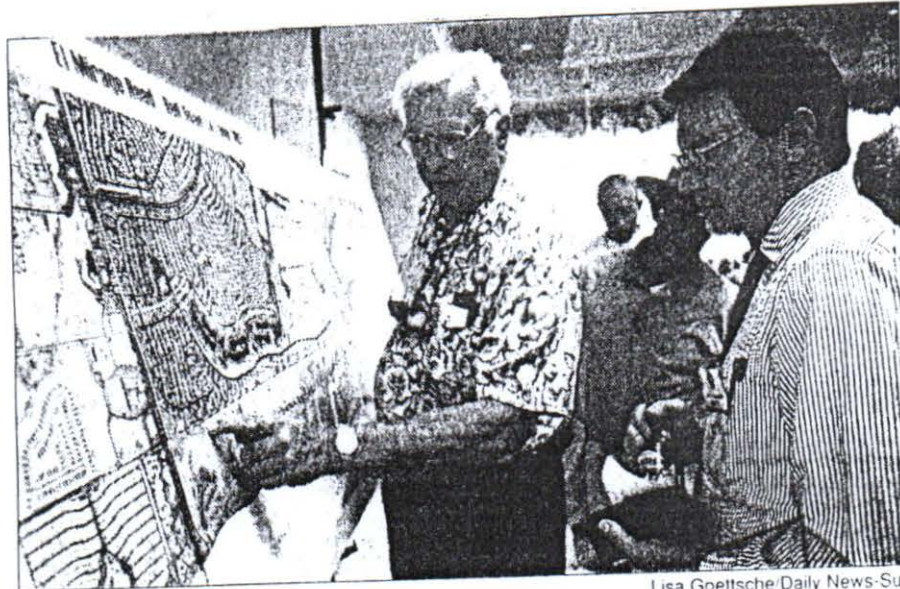
Interest also was piqued by an insert in a local publication, from the self-styled "Citizens for Yes on Loop 303."

That group, previously unknown, urged residents to vote for the connection, saying "Our property tax dollars paid for the construction of Loop

303," and adding "I want to have access..." and "I'm voting Yes..." as if the flyer were from a resident entitled to vote.

Carole Hubbs, president of the centers governing board, said the flyers had been prepared and distributed by a man who wants to build on the land between the Sun City West wall and Loop 303, and who believes his property would be worth more with the access, she said as she counted votes in the governing board conference room.

She also said the matter of no exit from Loop 303 to the Deer Valley Drive area could end up in court if the lack of access damages the man's ability to use the land.



Lisa Goettsche/Daily News-Sun

George McCormack, a resident of Sun City West, discusses Plan B of the expansion and realignment of El Mirage Road with Mike Dawson of MCDOT.

Westers like option of moving El Mirage Road

By **BRUCE ELLISON**
DAILY NEWS-SUN

While county officials will seriously consider moving El Mirage Road away from the Sun City West wall before widening it, cost will play a big part in the ultimate location, they said Thursday.

About 850 people turned out over several hours Thursday afternoon at the West Valley Art Museum to look at maps, aerial photos and suggested sites for what in a few years will be a six-lane El Mirage Road to link Bell Road with the planned Loop 303 to the north and to major housing projects under development even farther north. Its planned speed limit would be 50 mph.

Construction likely would start in 2001.

El Mirage Road is eventually planned to connect with State Route 74 (the Carefree Highway) near Lake Pleasant. In the next 20 years, traffic is expected to increase from the current 8,000 vehicles a day to a projected 22,000.

A dozen officials from the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, and its consultants, explained the alternatives and the drawbacks and benefits of each.

The county's preferred route, at least now, is to widen the existing El Mirage Road, in part because the county already owns most of

See Moving El, A5

10-9-99

(OVER)

the needed right of way, making it the least costly choice at about \$19.9 million.

A new or taller soundproof wall would be built along the Sun City West boundary, they said.

But Sun City West residents, fearful of the increased traffic and noise that a through route would bring, have asked the county to move the entire road about 600 feet east, to behind where the Interfaith Services building and luminaria warehouse now stand.

That route is the official position of the Property Owners and Residents Association, said PORA president Phil Garner, who spent several hours at the session.

But, as MCDOT's Mike Dawson pointed out to several questioners, much of that land belongs to the State Land Trust, and cannot be taken by the county without paying the price the land trust asks. It is not subject to condemnation.

Since the Land Trust is required by law to maximize the value of its holdings, the choice wouldn't be cheap, he said.

In addition to the right of way, the moved El Mirage Road would need a bridge — at Beardsley Road — and a large box culvert near where El Mirage curves west to become Deer Valley Road.

Costs of the alternate route haven't been calculated, but given the opinions in its favor, officials now will cost it out.

Another public meeting will be scheduled early next year, officials said.

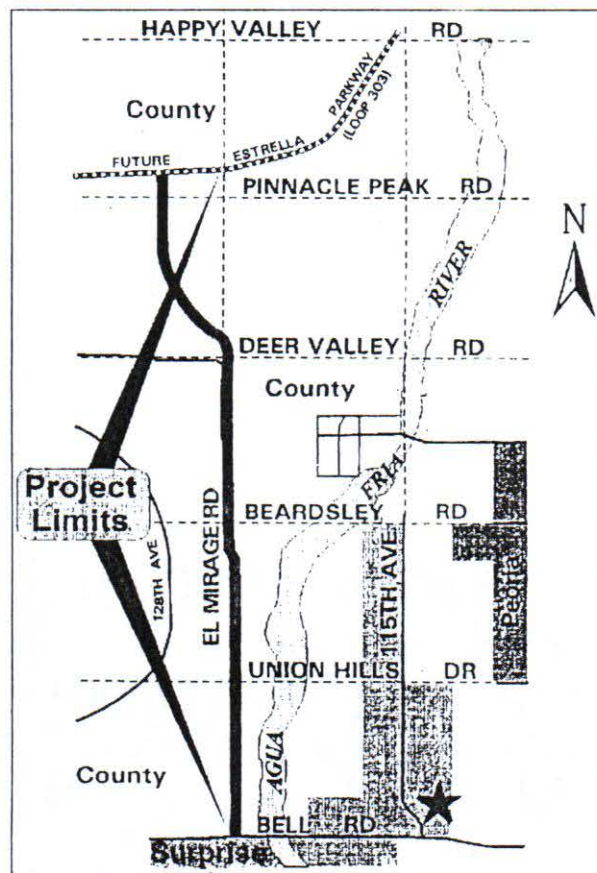
Among those listening to the arguments and checking the drawings was Jean Schwarz, a relative newcomer to Sun City West.

"We don't live that close," she said, "But we have heard people who live near the wall talking about all the noise. When they were building the new Catholic church (at 151st Avenue and Deer Valley Drive) and the fire station (at 135th and Deer Valley) they said there were a lot of noisy trucks.

"It's hard to know which is the best choice."

Still, for virtually all the residents who filled out opinion forms, there was little debate.

With about 750 comment forms turned in, said Helen Carroll, a MCDOT spokeswoman,



the choice was to relocate the road away from the wall — by about 30 to one.

"Almost everybody thought that was the best. Some added comments about leaving the old pavement in place as a frontage road, and some people saw the need for a bicycle path," she said.

Indeed, one couple wrote asking that a bike path be installed somewhere. "In our opinion, this is a definite sign of progress and we wish you all the luck in the world," that form said.

And, Carroll added, one man whispered to officials as the session ended that it would be best to widen the existing road. "Don't spend too much money," he said.

A reporter's look through the comment forms found almost all filled out by residents who listed Sun City West as their address. One said he lived in Sun City Grand, three were from Surprise and another had a Phoenix address.

Daily News-Sun, Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1999

County prohibits through traffic at SCW west wall

By **BRUCE ELLISON**
DAILY NEWS-SUN

There's good news this week for residents on Sonora Lane and Via Montoya in the far west reaches of the Sun City West expansion area.

Two vacant lots that lead through an opening in the Sun City West wall along the old route of Deer Valley Road will be posted to prohibit through truck traffic, PORA President Phil Garner said Tuesday.

Garner said he has been told by county transportation officials that signs should be up at that intersection by Friday.

The county also plans to install a physical barricade at the Beardsley Canal, about a half mile west, to prevent traffic from entering from that direction along the old Deer Valley Road alignment, Garner told members of the Property Owners and Residents Association.

Residents of the two quiet

streets, and the area nearby, had been upset by through traffic using the Deer Valley Road right-of-way to reach 163rd Avenue, a journey that required a trip through the McMicken drainage channel and across the Beardsley Canal, as well as a series of tortuous turns under three sets of power lines.

"That's wonderful," said Dolores Metzger this morning. Metzger lives on Sonora Lane just a few houses from the shortcut.

"The folks across the street have a granddaughter who visits, and they have to watch her every minute she's outside," Metzger said. "The trucks barrel through here starting at 5:30 in the morning. They wake everybody up."

That through access will be eliminated, though access to the land behind the wall from Sun City West will

See Desert shortcut, A5

Desert shortcut will be cut off

From A1

be maintained for the time being.

The 50-foot paved access strip, and partial pavement behind the wall, had been left open to provide a landowner there with the ability to reach his property after the county barricaded Deer Valley Drive at the Sun City West wall.

But officials have apparently determined that while they have to provide access to the land behind the wall, they don't have to permit through traffic.

"It's about time," said Marcia Seidner, who lives on a cul de sac just off Sonora Lane.

Seidner and George

Patterson of the Sonora Home Owners Association, were among 50 of so area residents who staged a protest at the shortcut in early June.

"We've been after them to stop this for year, so it's about time," she repeated.

The original, unpaved Deer Valley Road runs along the ditch and walls that divide the original part of Sun City West from the expansion area. It extends roughly from the new fire station at 135th Avenue straight west 2.5 miles to the west wall at 155th Avenue (the intersection of Sonora Lane and Via Montoya). Developer Del Webb Corp. relocated Deer Valley Road, and changed its

name to Deer Valley Drive within the planned community, but one of those two roads must provide access to the area west of the wall.

Trucks from a landscaping service off 163rd Avenue had raised residents' ire by their regular use of the shortcut, rather than taking a longer route along Grand Avenue and R.H. Johnson Boulevard to job sites in Sun City West.

The land behind the wall has been proposed for development, but is in litigation as to its access. When the legalities have been resolved, Garner said, it's likely that the two vacant lots, the last residential sites in Sun City West, will be built on, and the wall closed off.

Closing the breach

DEL WEBB CORP.:

Developer paid for installation of locked gate cutting off access through wall to desert from Sun City West

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

It is no longer possible to drive into the desert through an opening in the Sun City West wall at Via Montoya and Sonora Lane.

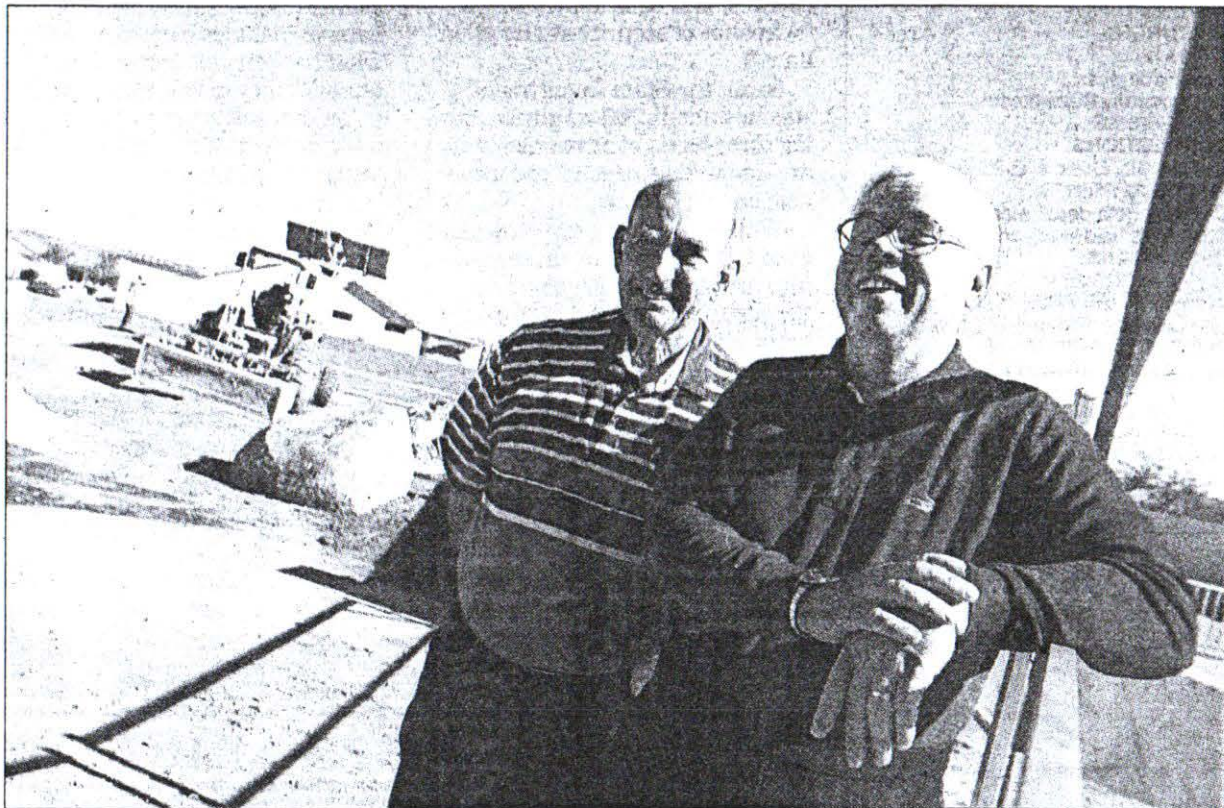
Workers hired by Del Webb Corp. have closed the wall and installed a locked gate, and now are landscaping the area that may eventually accommodate two new homes.

That will stop truck traffic that had been using the dirt roads beyond as a shortcut to 163rd Avenue north of Grand Avenue in Surprise. It also should cut down on vandalism and illicit dumping in the area near the Sun City West wall.

But it took more than two years, numerous meetings and a series of negotiations, including some court action, to conclude what at first sounded like a simple matter.

The hole in the wall allowed access along the original Deer Valley Road alignment (prior to the creation of Deer Valley Drive) from Sun City West into a parcel of land that soon will be cut off from other access by the construction of Loop 303.

And that was the problem. A property owner can't be denied access to his land by fiat. That makes the land unusable.



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Joe Masciotro, left, Sonoran Homeowners Association treasurer, and President Kevin Foley discuss the locked gate Foley is leaning on that Del Webb installed to close an opening in the Sun City West wall at Via Montoya and Sonora Lane that allowed vehicles to drive out into the desert, as workers in the background landscape lots adjacent to the approach.

But as traffic and dumping problems worsened and pleas for help from nearby dwellers increased, all the parties involved finally worked out a solution.

Representatives of the landowner, Phoenix Metropolitan Investors, as well as county officials, the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association and Del Webb Corp., which still owns the

two unbuilt lots, agreed the wall could be finished and a locked gate installed.

Webb, which still wants to build homes on the lots once a legal accord on other access is ready, agreed to put up the wall and gate and pay for attractive landscaping — all of which was done in the last few days.

Kevin Foley, president of the

180-unit Sonora Homeowners Association in that area, credited county Supervisor Jan Brewer for working with the homeowners to get the gate installed.

For her part, Brewer credited county staff for putting in long hours to find a solution, adding, "I hope things will be better now for those residents."

Wednesday, October 20, 1999 • The Arizona Republic

Sun City West residents to vote on Loop 303 connection

REFERENDUM

When: Ballots for Sun City West residents will be cast from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 29 at the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center social hall, R.H. Johnson and Meeker boulevards.

Who can vote: Residents must have current Recreation Centers cards but do not have to be registered to vote in Arizona.

Early voting: 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday and next Wednesday and 6 to 9 p.m. Oct. 27 at the PORA offices, 13815 Camino del Sol.

Informational meetings: 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Monday at the social hall.

Open house: The Maricopa County Department of Transportation will explain plans for the Loop 303 from the Grand Avenue overpass to Lake Pleasant Road (99th Avenue) from 8 a.m. to noon Nov. 2 at the social hall.

Information: (623) 584-4288.

Maricopa County officials will let Sun City West residents decide on Oct. 29 whether the Loop 303 Estrella Freeway should be connected at Deer Valley Drive.

Two years ago, residents in the sprawling retirement community strongly protested that proposal, and Supervisor Jan Brewer promised that the county would not build an interchange there if they didn't want it.

Now that plans for freeway construction near Deer Valley Drive are progressing, community leaders want to know whether most Sun City West residents still object to the connection.

The Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association and the Sun City West Recreation Centers will sponsor the Oct. 29 referendum.

In 1997, there was no election on the subject, but several residents voiced their opposition at public meetings.

"As I promised, without hesitation, Maricopa County will not provide access to or from Sun City West via a Loop 303/Deer Valley

what they're

talking about

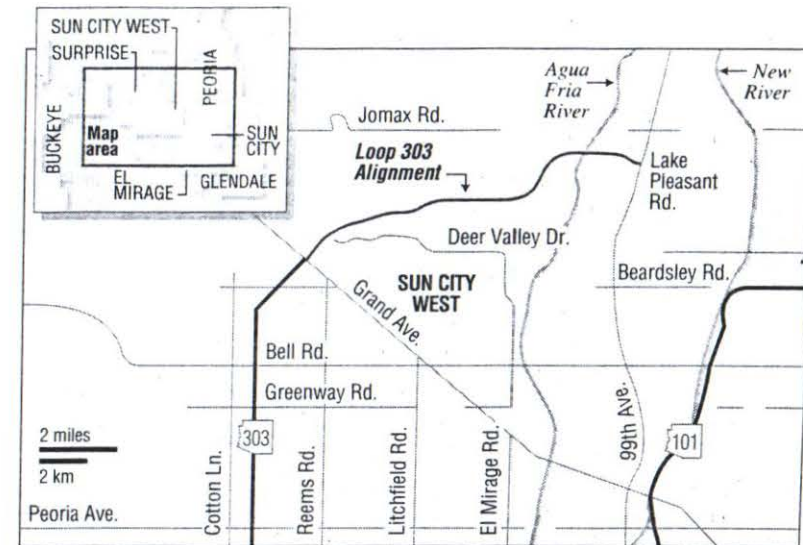
Drive connection unless the residents request us to," Brewer said in a letter to the PORA and Recreation Centers board presidents. "I gave you that commitment over two years ago, and I have not wavered on this point."

PORA President Phil Garner and Recreation Centers President Carole Hubbs said they believe residents should vote on the connection before the county finishes designing the freeway and starts construction.

"We wanted to put this to a vote now so we can really send a message to the supervisors," Garner said.

Loop 303 now is a 14-mile roadway between Thomas Road and Grand Avenue in the far West Valley. On the south, Loop 303 is being extended from Thomas Road to Interstate 10, county transportation spokeswoman Roberta Crowe said.

On the north, the county's proposed schedule calls for construction to start in summer 2001 from



where Loop 303 now ends at Grand Avenue in Surprise northeasterly to Lake Pleasant Road in Peoria. Plans to have freeway access to Sun City West, west of where Deer Valley Drive ends, depend on the outcome of the Sun City West referendum vote. An overpass is planned at Grand Avenue, Crowe said.

Eventually, the freeway will be built from Lake Pleasant Road east to connect with Interstate 17.

When finished, Loop 303 will cross Goodyear, Surprise, Glendale, Peoria and Phoenix, as well as unincorporated county areas.

— Lori Baker/
The Arizona Republic

Sun City West rejects Loop 303 interchange

Seeking to preserve their lifestyle, Sun City West residents on Friday soundly rejected a proposal to have access to and from the planned Loop 303 Estrella Freeway from the west end of Deer Valley Drive.

valley

update

The vote was 4,933 to 1,609 at the community referendum election. Sun City West has about

30,000 residents.

The Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association and the Sun City West Recreation Centers sponsored the election, which was held at the urging of Maricopa County Supervisor Jan Brewer. The District 4 lawmaker promised the county would follow the residents' wishes.

"We're going to respect the views of the voters, and that means that there will be no access from Deer Valley Drive," Brewer said after election

AT A GLANCE

Open house

WHAT: The Maricopa County Department of Transportation will discuss plans for Loop 303.

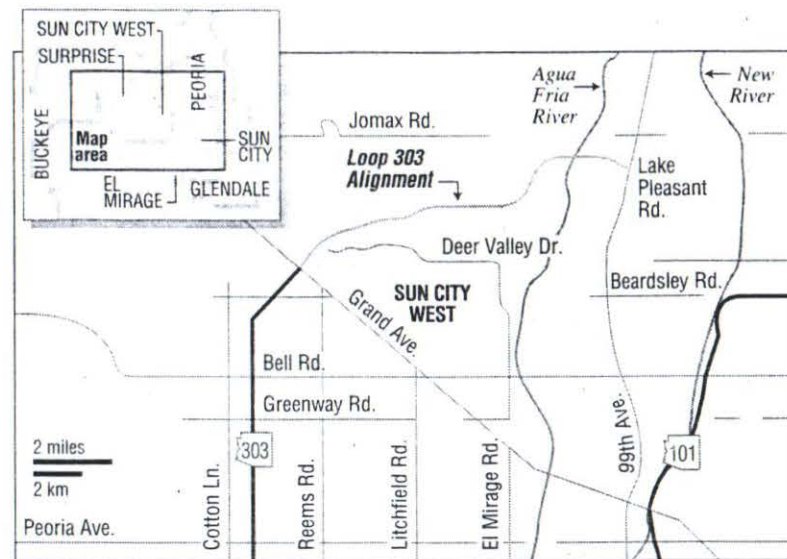
WHEN: 8 a.m. to noon Tuesday.

WHERE: R.H. Johnson Social Hall, 19803 R.H. Johnson Blvd., Sun City West.

results were announced.

PORA President Phil Garner said he wasn't surprised by the vote, adding that residents were concerned about the traffic and noise that the project would bring into their neighborhoods.

Loop 303 now is a 14-mile roadway between Thomas Road and Grand Avenue in the far West Valley. On the north, the county's proposed schedule calls for construction to start in summer 2001 from where Loop 303



The Arizona Republic

now ends at Grand Avenue in Surprise northeasterly to Lake Pleasant Road in Peoria. An overpass is planned at Grand Avenue, county transportation spokeswoman Roberta Crowe said.

On the south, Loop 303 is being extended from Thomas Road to Interstate 10. Eventually, the freeway will be built from Lake Pleasant Road east to connect with Interstate 17.

When finished, Loop 303 will cross

Goodyear, Surprise, Glendale, Peoria and Phoenix, as well as unincorporated county areas.

Construction bidding for the new 8-mile section of roadway between Reems Road in Surprise and Lake Pleasant Road in Peoria and a new overpass at Grand Avenue are scheduled for May 2001. Much of the design work on the project is complete.

— Lori Baker/The Republic

— SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT — NOVEMBER 3-9, 1999

Out of the Loop

SCW residents veto Deer Valley-Loop 303 access

By **TOM BARRY**
Independent Newspapers

Fearing intrusive traffic and noise, Sun City West residents say they want to stay out of the Loop.

In an unofficial referendum vote last week, residents said motorists traveling on Loop 303, also known as the Estrella Parkway, should be prevented from gaining access to the community by way of Deer Valley Drive at the community's western boundary.

The referendum vote was held Oct. 29, with two days of early voting held earlier in the week. It was jointly sponsored by the Property

Owners and Residents Association and the Recreation Centers of Sun City West.

Polling at both R.H. Johnson Social Hall and the PORA office were marked by long lines and an overwhelming turnout. In the end, 6,542 votes were cast, with 1,609 in favor of access and 4,933 opposed.

There was little doubt as to the outcome, said PORA President Phil Garner. "We knew what the outcome would be by the overwhelming opposition indicated by the residents earlier this year in our membership survey," he said.

With the question of access going down to resounding defeat, resi-

dents sent a clear message to the Maricopa County Department of Transportation to forestall any such connection, although the project had been approved two decades ago and budgeting arrangement have been made.

In 1997, the PORA and the Rec Centers endorsed an agreement with county Supervisor Jan Brewer, Dist. 4, that would have allowed the intersection to be built but to defer its opening until after its completion some time in 2002 and a referendum vote was taken.

But, with Loop 303 construction

See ■ VETO, Page 10

to begin next spring, PORA said the decision should not be deferred any longer.

Although the election has no legal standing, Supervisor Brewer said she would respect the wishes of her constituents in Sun City West.

However, the fate of the Loop 303-Deer Valley Drive connection

could ultimately rest in the hands of the Superior Court. Phoenix Metro Investors, Inc., the owner of a large undeveloped parcel of land immediately adjacent Sun City West, has filed suit challenging MCDOT's decision to defer the connection. The county has asked to court to dismiss the suit.

Traffic jam

VF

TRAFFIC

3-12-99

Housing fuels fears

By **BRUCE ELLISON**
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Already awash in traffic concerns stemming from a housing project next to Sun City West, PORA directors now also fear a flood of cars from a development planned three miles north of their community.

They will meet with representatives of Lakeland Village on May 25 to learn more about how that 9,373-unit, resort-like housing project near Jomax and El Mirage roads north of Sun City West will affect traffic on El Mirage Road down to Bell Road.

Lakeland Village, proposed by developer Gary Torhjem, expects to start construction in June 2000, according to preliminary plans filed with Maricopa County officials.

Its primary access will be to Loop 303, the proposed road that will run east and west across its southern boundary at Jomax Road.

However, Loop 303 won't be ready before traffic to and from Lakeland Village needs access, and that access likely will come from an upgraded and widened El Mirage Road, said Phil Garner, president of Property Owners and Residents Association.

"Traffic is PORA's primary concern," Garner said at the Tuesday PORA board meeting.

The traffic impact on Sun City West from the proposed 638-acre Continental Homes development on Deer Valley Road next to the entrance to the Sun City West expansion area "will be far outweighed by the impact of the 3,126-acre Lakeland Village development," Garner said.

"We also need to keep in mind that additional developments are being planned to the north and west of Sun City West," he warned.

The May 25 session in the

PORA conference room, 13815 Camino del Sol, begins at 9 a.m. The public is welcome to attend but not participate.

In other news, Garner said the Continental Homes project has not yet been resubmitted to county planners, who asked for some additional information and drawings at a Technical Advisory Committee meeting six weeks ago.

After that, the staff makes its recommendations to the Planning and Zoning

Commission, which has said it will conduct public hearings on the project. It then will forward its recommendations to county supervisors for final action.

Key unresolved issues for PORA are wastewater treatment and housing density, Garner said.

"PORA's position on density remains as previously published and submitted to Maricopa County," he said.

"Since it was based on specific logic, PORA will not arbitrarily or blindly change the number up or down."

The Sun City West Community Coalition has publicly disagreed with PORA's numbers, suggesting that about 300 fewer homes than what PORA might approve would be the better number.

The coalition began a petition drive to take to the county three weeks ago and has secured more than 8,000 signatures. Other petitions, from residents in the expansion area, have been sent to supervisors saying that PORA does not represent all homeowners in the area.

That news, in turn, sparked an irked response in print from Continental's David Maguire, the vice president heading up the Pleasant Valley Ranch project, wondering why the coalition didn't let the developer try to work with it to resolve the issues.

**Lakeland Village
is a proposed
resort-like
housing project
with 9,373 units
near Jomax and El
Mirage roads
north of Sun City
West**

Monday, May 17, 1999 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

Traffic ahead

Sun City West faces more development

By BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Thirty acres of new homes, a care center, a convenience store and a restaurant just west of Sun City West could dump significant traffic onto Deer Valley Drive and 151st Avenue.

The traffic would come from west and north of the Sun City West wall at the west end of the current Deer Valley Drive. The site extends from the old Deer Valley Road alignment, just north of the wall behind Vista North Drive, northward along the wall to the alignment

of the proposed Loop 303. It abuts Sonora Lane and Desert Trails Golf Course

That tract is about 540 feet wide and about a half-mile long.

Representatives of the developer, Phoenix Metropolitan Investors, met late last week with officials of the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association to discuss their plans.

PORA president Phil Garner said this morning that the project appears to be conditioned on the completion of Deer Valley Drive to Loop 303 — something that county

Supervisor Jan Brewer promised in writing wouldn't happen unless both PORA and the Recreation Centers boards approve it.

That Loop 303 intersection, Garner said, is where the developers want to put the store and restaurant.

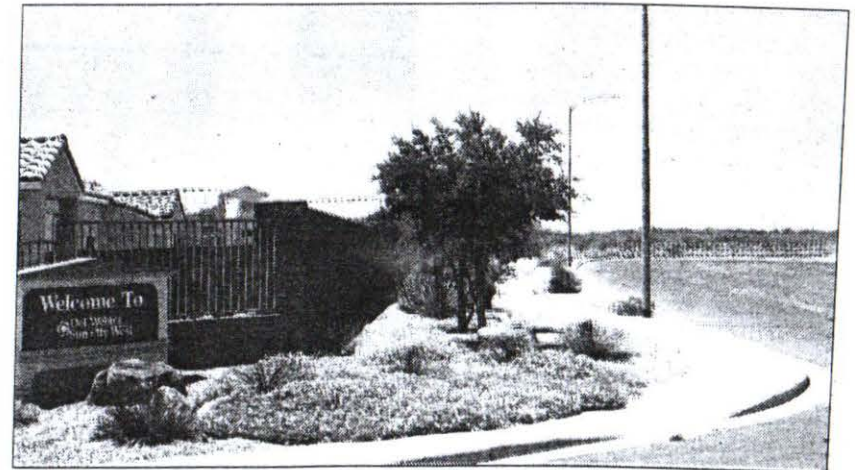
But in a May 14, 1997, letter to PORA and the Recreation Centers, Brewer said she told the Maricopa County Department of Transportation to place a barrier at the exit from Loop 303, "which would preclude access to Deer Valley Drive ... This barrier would remain in place unless and

until its removal were requested by the boards" of both PORA and the Centers, she wrote.

Brewer said this morning that "I'm firm on that. There won't be a connection to Loop 303 there unless the residents of Sun City West vote to approve it. And if I need to strengthen my commitment, I will."

Garner said the PMI representatives appeared surprised to learn that the Loop 303/Deer Valley Drive connection wasn't a sure thing.

But if they do go ahead with the project without that



Bruce Ellison/Daily News-Sun

Deer Valley Drive now dead ends at the west wall of the Sun City West expansion area.

connection, all the housing traffic and care center traffic will have only one way out of the area — onto Deer Valley Drive in Sun City West.

Completion of Loop 303, planned for 2002, will cut all access to the west.

When that Estrella Roadway

is built, there will be about 120 acres between the Sun City West walls and the freeway that will be landlocked and need access through Sun City West.

The county can't simply cut

See Residents fear, A5

OVER

Residents fear through traffic

From A1

off access to a public road — unless it buys the landlocked parcels.

Still under study is the future of the old Deer Valley Road alignment, visible at the intersection of Via Montoya and Sonora Lane, where two lots sit empty to allow access to the desert area behind the Sun City West wall.

That access is regularly used by trucks from a landscape service seeking entrance to the expansion area, residents say. They have objected to the traffic, but officials say the area needs the access.

Homeowners along Sonora Lane on Sunday weren't enthusiastic about the idea of new development behind their homes.

Two, who declined to be identified, said they feared the development was inevitable, but undesirable.

And they added that if traffic needed access to the site, that access should be in the existing five-lane Deer Valley Drive, not through the much smaller space between two homes.

Deer Valley Drive was relocated when Del Webb Corp. built the expansion area. As

part of that relocation, the road was made wider than usual, so it could handle traffic to and from Loop 303, when that roadway was completed.

At the time — in the early 1990s — the Loop 303 connection was seen as necessary to keep heavy traffic off 151st Avenue.

But since then, community sentiment has shifted to one of keeping Deer Valley Drive a local road, with no connection to Loop 303.

Petitions with several thousand signatures, and several meetings attended by angry residents brought the accord with Brewer that the roadway connection would be built but not opened until after local approval.

Deer Valley Drive now ends about a block west of Sonora Lane, where red and white barricades stop traffic. There is no pavement into the desert beyond, though the area appears to have become a dumping ground for neighborhood trash and brush.

Tracks show that motorcycles and ATVs are frequent visitors to that part of the desert, which is home to coyotes, scorpions and rattlesnakes, residents along Sonora Lane said.

PORA wants El Mirage Road moved

Widening existing street would hurt Sun City West, group says

By Lori Baker
The Arizona Republic

SUN CITY WEST — The Property Owners and Residents Association wants the county to build a new El Mirage Road east of Sun City West rather than widen the existing two-lane road.

County officials said the road expansion is needed to accommodate residents who will be living in the 9,300-home Lakeland Village development north of Sun City West.

The Board of Supervisors earlier this month approved the new housing development, which will bring nearly 25,000 residents to 3,128 acres between Peoria and Surprise.

Developer Gary Torhjelm will transform about 5 square miles of desert bounded by the alignments of Jomax and Lone Mountain roads between 113th and 131st avenues into a master-planned community with 9,373 homes, four schools, four parks, shops and

two golf courses.

County officials plan to widen El Mirage Road into a four-lane road from Bell Road north to the Loop 303 freeway and ultimately into six lanes when the development is built out in 2012 to 2015. It also is projected that the new road eventually will extend north to Arizona 74, which connects Grand Avenue to Interstate 17. As part of the Lakeland approval, Torhjelm agreed to pay for the cost to add two lanes to El Mirage Road from Bell to Beardsley roads and construct a new two-lane El Mirage Road from Deer Valley Drive to Loop 303.

PORA President Phil Garner said Sun City West residents are concerned about traffic congestion and noise that could result on the three-mile stretch from Bell Road to Loop 303 if the existing El Mirage Road is expanded. He said a costly and unattractive sound barrier would have to be built.

As an alternative, Garner suggested in a

letter to the county Department of Transportation earlier this month that planners consider designing a "new" El Mirage Road that would run north from Bell Road starting several hundred feet east of the existing road.

The new El Mirage Road "will go a long way in protecting property values and the lifestyle of our residents, especially along the east boundary of Sun City West," Garner said.

Sami Ayoub, project manager for the transportation department, said engineers are examining PORA's suggestion.

Public meetings will be held the first week of October to discuss plans for El Mirage Road. Ayoub said he expects a decision to be made on the road's design by the end of the year.

Another concern, Garner said, is that county studies show that the McMicken Dam

— Please see SCW, Page 6

SCW group wants street moved before it's widened

— SCW, from Page 1

Outlet Wash, adjacent to the eastern boundary of Sun City West from about Beardsley Road to Deer Valley Road, would have to be moved further east if the existing El Mirage Road is expanded.

"Moving this wash would involve many thousands of cubic meters of east bank excavation and subsequent fill material to be added to the west

bank of the wash," Garner said.

Building a road parallel to the existing road would not require disturbing the wash, he said. Instead, a series of box culverts would be required across the wash south of Beardsley Road where the wash turns east to the Agua Fria River.

Includes information from staff writer Jeffry Nelson. Lori Baker can be reached at (602) 444-7120 or at lori.baker@pni.com.

Proposal to gate Sun City West opens debate

By BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

It's legally possible to make Sun City West a gated, access-controlled community, but the practical difficulties are daunting, and the dollar cost would be high.

Questions about gating the community of 31,000 have been raised by several people in Sun City West in light of a proposed multi-generational development on the community's eastern border.

Roger Cousin, who helped block connection of Deer Valley Drive to Loop 303, is all for it, while Robert McCurdy, an incoming PORA board member, thinks partial gating should at least be studied.

"We might be able to partially close some roads in Sun City West," McCurdy said. "I don't think there's a prayer of gating the whole community."

It's also a question that Recreation Centers officials have decided to take a look at, too, at the suggestion of the Property Owners and Residents Association.

Incoming centers board

President Carole Hubbs, a lawyer, has asked the association's attorneys to get information on how full or partial gating would work.

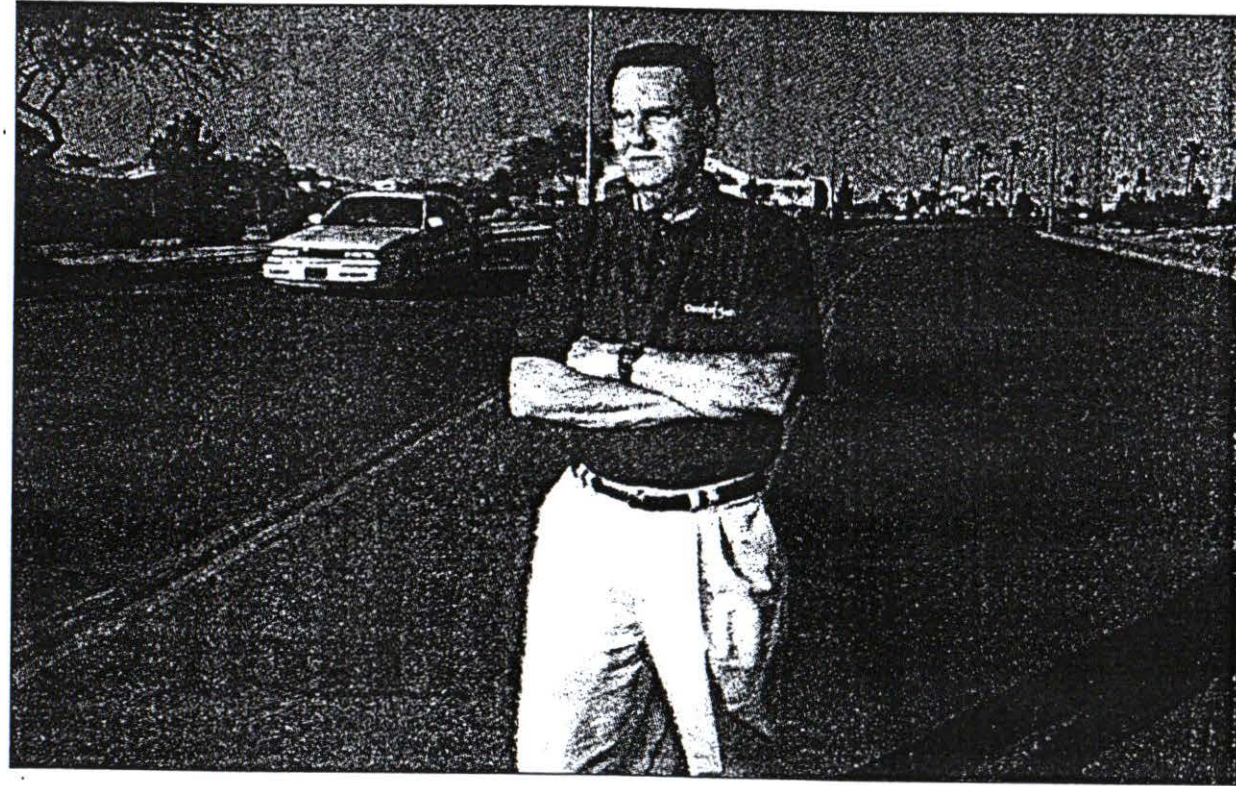
Centers' attorney William G. Beyer said late Wednesday that "it's a very complicated issue that will take us some time to look into."

Mike Dawson, an official of the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, told about 3,000 people at Tuesday's informational session in the Sundome on the project planned by Continental Homes that gating is legal, but the process would be long and hard.

If Sun City West were to successfully navigate the somewhat murky road closure waters, it would probably become the nation's largest gated community, both in population and in area.

Most gated communities in Arizona are small, a square mile or so. Among them are the Happy Trails resort and Sun Village in Surprise, with about 1,500 residents in each.

Sun City West is about 7,000



Roger Cousin would like to see a gate on Deer Valley Drive at the entrance to Sun City West.

Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

acres — more than 11 square miles — and has about 30,000 residents.

Some Florida condominium communities with as many as 10,000 residents also are

gated, but they are physically small and often have compact,

► See Cost to, A7

12-15-98

OVER

◀ From A1

multi-story structures with limited roads.

Sun City West has a major business core, funeral home, offices, banks, a hospital, care centers and nursing homes and other retail operations, plus more than a dozen churches, some of whose parishioners live outside the community.

Many users of the business establishes also are from other communities.

"We don't know of any other area in the state that large that's gated," said Teresa Verbout, a spokeswoman for MCDOT.

The dollar cost of a gated community would be high, say observers including Dawson.

The abutting property owners would have to pay for all road maintenance and upkeep, including traffic signals. As roads age, Dawson warned, the costs rise.

They also would need to provide access control, probably at five gates, and that would take extensive manpower. Gates likely would be installed on Johnson Boulevard at Bell and at Grand, on Meeker Boulevard at Grand, at Deer Valley Drive and at the Beardsley Road entrance off El Mirage Road.

But the law does not allow a road to simply be blocked. That is, you couldn't barricade Deer Valley Drive at the east

entrance to Sun City West, as Roger Cousin would like, or put a gate there to control who comes in.

The only way access could be controlled is to make the roadways beyond the access into private roads.

And the law says access can't be denied to owners, their guests or invitees "and persons lawfully conducting business."

Hubbs, who chaired the Recreation Centers Legal Affairs Committee this year, said it's possible that the Recreation Centers could become the mandatory membership group that operated the roads.

"It would take a vote of the members," she said. They would have to approve changes in the bylaws and charter, alter the organization's purpose, and decide how to admit commercial lot owners to membership or otherwise assess them for road maintenance.

Those are some of the things lawyers are looking at, Hubbs said.

"Practically, I don't think we could close the entire community," she said Wednesday. "gating some residential parts of it might be possible."

Gated private roads might also mean a loss of some other public services, such as mail delivery, UPS trucks and those free throw-away newspapers many residents rec-

Here's what it takes to gate Sun City West

■ Some sort of property owners association willing to take over the roads and maintain them. It would have to include all abutters to the roads, including commercial lands, and would have to be a mandatory membership group.

■ A two-thirds vote of the owners of residential property in the area to be gated.

■ Approval by a majority of the commercial owners in the area to be gated.

■ Enough emergency access to the gated area to satisfy

police, fire and ambulance needs.

■ A way to let legitimate guests and business users into the gated area.

■ Approval of county supervisors, who would have to vote to abandon the roads.

The law also allows portions of the community — such as the expansion area — to be gated under the same provisions.

(Source: A.R.S. Sec. 28-1901 to 1908. Disposition of Public Roadways.)

eive.

But that depends more on the rules of the post office or the other service providers than on county action or state law.

In addition, the property owners association would have to find some way to enforce traffic rules in the gated area.

Capt. John Myers of the Surprise Police Department said only driving while intoxicated, reckless driving or an injury accident with criminal intent can be investigated on private roads, such as those in Sun Village or Happy Trails.

"Speeding, parking, illegal turns — those things are up to

the homeowners association," he said.

Verbout at MCDOT also said that was an uncharted area of law: Most gated communities have no stop lights, for instance, while Sun City West has several.

"We don't have any precedents for that," Verbout said.

There's also the question of citing violators into court, which might not be possible. And there would be no way to force the community association to use uniform traffic code signage, which also might cause confusion.

A deputy county attorney who deals with transportation issues, James Minter, could not be reached for comment.

Painted guards pose as guides for area steer

RUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

Cattle guards have been painted on Beardsley Road and Deer Valley Drive outside Sun City West in an effort to keep meandering steers out of the retirement community.

Most cattle guards are real — that is, they are made by inserting railroad rails into the pavement over a kind of ditch, to discourage cows, who can't see where their feet are, from walking across.

Cattlemen say that painted guards often are effective, but only with those animals which already have once tried to cross a real cattle guard. So it remains to be seen if the painted guards will keep cattle from the Agua Fria river bed from wandering into Sun City West.

Real cattle guards might cost as much as \$30,000 to install, county officials said. That's why the faux guards were tried first.

But even if the guards themselves work, the one on Beardsley Road still will need to be improved. With no fencing adjacent to it, cows may just walk onto the road shoulder and ignore it.

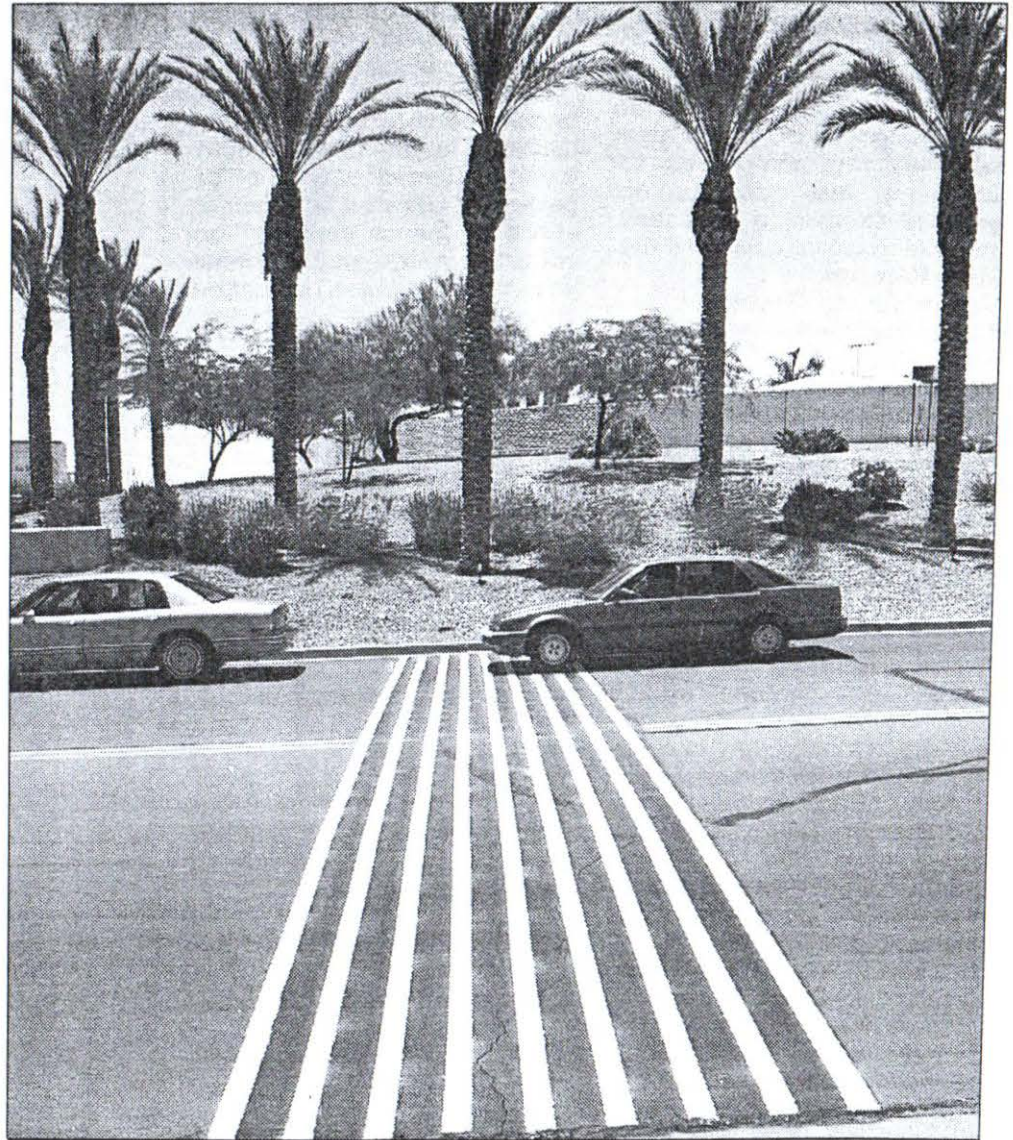
Jerry Medford, who heads the legal affairs committee at the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, said Friday that the centers plan to pile up some attractive-looking boulders between the cattle guard and the walls, to discourage the cows from trying to get in.

"They don't like to try to climb over big rocks," Medford said.

This spring, a number of cattle wandered into Sun City West from the nearby Agua Fria river bed, which is open range under state law. They seemed to be attracted by the lush green of the golf courses, the abundant water, and the shrubbery of back yards.

The guard on Deer Valley Drive extends all the way to the community's wall on the south, and is fenced to the north to the also-fenced border of the nearby Pleasant Valley citrus ranch.

Just to be sure motorists know there are cattle guards in the road — even fake ones — the county's Department of Transportation also installed diamond-shaped yellow caution signs reading "CATTLE GUARD" about 300 feet on either side of the fake guards.



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

A cattle guard has been painted across Beardsley Road at the east entrance of Sun City West in hopes of keeping cattle out of the community.

Friday, March 28, 1997

Loop 303 interchange a hot topic

Foes fear link to extended freeway will bring more traffic, noise, crime

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

SUN CITY WEST — Wearing sunglasses and casual clothes, she toured the desert north of Sun City West for a look at the site of a proposed highway interchange that is causing so much fuss.

"Every place I go to speak, this is the big issue," said Jan Brewer, a member of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

Brewer, whose district includes this plush retirement community, said a plan to extend the Loop 303 expressway, including a possible interchange at Deer Valley Drive, is by far the hottest item on her current agenda of county business.

"I've looked at maps," Brewer said. "I've looked at videos. I've looked at everything

that's been written by pen or pencil."

Last week, she spent more than an hour motoring through the area with officials of the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, including Paul Sullivan, the Loop 303 project manager.

Brewer paid special attention to the proposed four-way interchange at Deer Valley Drive.

"I want to see where it's going," she told Sullivan. "I want to see how it's going to impact the people.

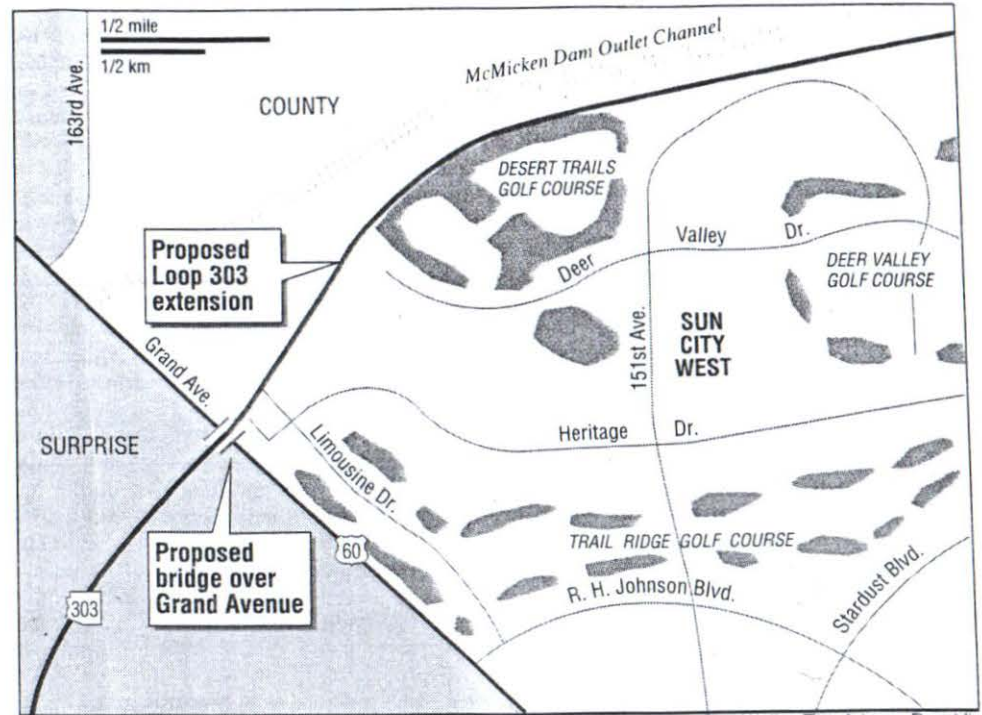
This thing needs to be resolved."

Sullivan, who thinks a lot of "misinformation" from some residents is clouding the debate, said his agency is working



James Garcia/The Arizona Republic

County Supervisor Jan Brewer (right) inspects the site of a proposed interchange with Loop 303 near Sun City West with Greg Holverson (left), project engineer; Bruce Ward, of the county transportation department; and Paul Sullivan, project manager.



Gus Walker/The Arizona Republic

closely with opponents and proponents to gain their input on the controversy.

In fact, two residents of Sun City West — Roger Cousin, an opponent, and Rollie Haas, a supporter of the project — have been invited to serve on a county task force that is studying the proposal, Sullivan said.

Greg Holverson, a project engineer, said

it will be several weeks before a decision is made. He said county highway officials are very mindful of the concerns of the residents in Sun City West.

In a nutshell, the county plans to break ground in late 2000 or early 2001 to extend

— See **FREeway**, Page 4

OVER

— **FREEWAY**, from page 1

the Loop 303 expressway, or Estrella Parkway, northeast across Grand Avenue and to the west and north of Sun City West.

The two-lane roadway will continue eastward for about 9 miles and connect with Lake Pleasant Road. It will align with Happy Valley Road east of the Agua Fria River.

The proposed \$25 million project includes a four-lane bridge over Grand Avenue and the Santa Fe Railway tracks. The bridge will measure 23 feet high from the tracks to the bottom of the span, officials said.

Some residents of Sun City West are worried that a proposed interchange at Deer Valley Drive, which now dead-ends west of Sun City West, just short of the planned parkway route, will result in traffic congestion, crime problems, noise and pollution.

Cousin, an outspoken opponent, said he doesn't oppose the roadway project. He said his major objection is linking the parkway with Deer Valley Drive, the major street in the northern end of Sun City West.

"Once we start to introduce outside traffic, we're also opening the door to crime, noise and pollution, and the possibility of a major accident on Deer Valley Drive," Cousin said.

He said he has forwarded to Brewer a stack of petitions signed by more than 5,000 people who are opposed to the interchange.

Cousin added that Noel Willis, president of the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents

Association, and Carole Hubbs, president of the Sun City West Recreation Centers, have joined the opposition faction.

Willis said he has asked the county to do a traffic study to determine the impact of an interchange on Deer Valley Drive and other major connecting streets in Sun City West, including 135th and 151st Avenues.

"We've talked enough in the abstract," Willis said. "Now it is time for some civil-engineering information."

Hubbs said her main concern is the safety of residents.

"If we put too much traffic on Deer Valley Drive, if it becomes too much of a thoroughfare, then people won't be able to drive on it with their golf carts," Hubbs said.

Haas, a staunch backer of the interchange, said it doesn't make sense to build such a large community as Sun City West and then "close the back doors."

"You have to provide a way for the people to get out and about," Haas said. "Deer Valley Drive needs to go through the wall and hook up with Grand Avenue."

County officials said residents at the northern end of Sun City West generally oppose the interchange because of the probable traffic increase in their neighborhoods.

They said southern residents tend to favor the interchange because it may reduce the number of motorists now using 135th and 151st avenues to travel to and from the northern reaches of Sun City West.

Haas, who lives on 151st Avenue, agreed, saying, "I'm bearing the brunt of all this traffic."

O U E R

'GOOD AS GOLD'

Three-wheel motorcycle is resident's prized

By TERI CARNICELLI
Sun Cities Independent

Sun City West resident Bill Thorburn catches the eyes of passersby wherever he goes — not for his stylish dress but for the glitter of his gold.

Mr. Thorburn has the unique distinction of owning the only gold-colored, three-wheeled, modified motorcycle/buggy in the community.

Make that the country. Or maybe even anywhere.

Mr. Thorburn welded the frame for his "custom trike" and had the fiberglass shell custom made nearly 10 years ago. Before that, he had long and rewarding experiences with various types of motorcycles.

But it was one not-so-happy experience that eventually led him to constructing his one-of-a-kind trike.

"I lost the use of my foot in a motorcycle accident and although I could ride a two-wheeler, it posed some problems," he explains.

Not wanting to give up his love of the open road and the feel of the wind on his face, he went to the drawing board to make his ride a little easier.

What he came up with was "Good As Gold," his homemade three-wheel motorcycle.

"I like it because, of course, I don't have to put my feet down at the stop signs," Mr. Thorburn says.

"I can go off-road and through the desert and everything."

The 800-pound custom trike has a Volkswagen Beetle engine and an automatic transmission, including reverse; the gear shift lever is located to the outside left of the trike and lies parallel to the ground.

Like a motorcycle, the accelerator is located in the handle but the anti-skid brake pedal is on the

“
*It's a real crowd
pleaser ... It's always
been a looker.*”

floor as in a car. The 120-horsepower trike also boasts air suspension, an AM/FM cassette stereo and a citizens band radio.

For comfort's sake, the seat is gently reclined to shift the weight off the driver's tailbone. The trike also possesses a mini-floorboard so Mr. Thorburn can rest his feet in the enclave and protect them from rocks and water.

But it was the final touch that got Good As Gold her name.

The trike features no less than 23 coats of gold-flecked paint.

"It's a real crowd pleaser," Mr.

possession

Gold made their way to Sun City West two years ago and almost immediately both were welcomed by the local motorcycle group, the Power Riders.

Mr. Thorburn, who also owns a motor scooter, is a member of the Flying Wheels as well. He is very active with both groups and takes several trips during the months he resides in the community. "We go to Baghdad, Yarnell, Ajo, Prescott, Flagstaff, all around.

"We go for a day trip and lunch. It's more family oriented than, say, the Hell's Angels," he jokes.

Now that he's got Good As Gold, he'll be able to keep on triken' for a long time to come.

Thorburn laughs.

Some of those crowds pleased, awed or merely dumbstruck by Good As Gold were on another continent entirely.

"In the late 1980s I shipped it to Europe, and my son and I, for three months, toured" the continent.

His son rode alongside the trike on a BMW motorcycle purchased from the factory in Munich.

"We drove through Switzerland and went on over to Moscow and Bulgaria and down into places you can't get into now. Even going into Russia was pretty hard in those days," he recalls.

"We also toured France and England. I went to the Paris Air Show and Good As Gold just stole the show.

"It's always been a looker," he says with pride.

Mr. Thorburn and Good As

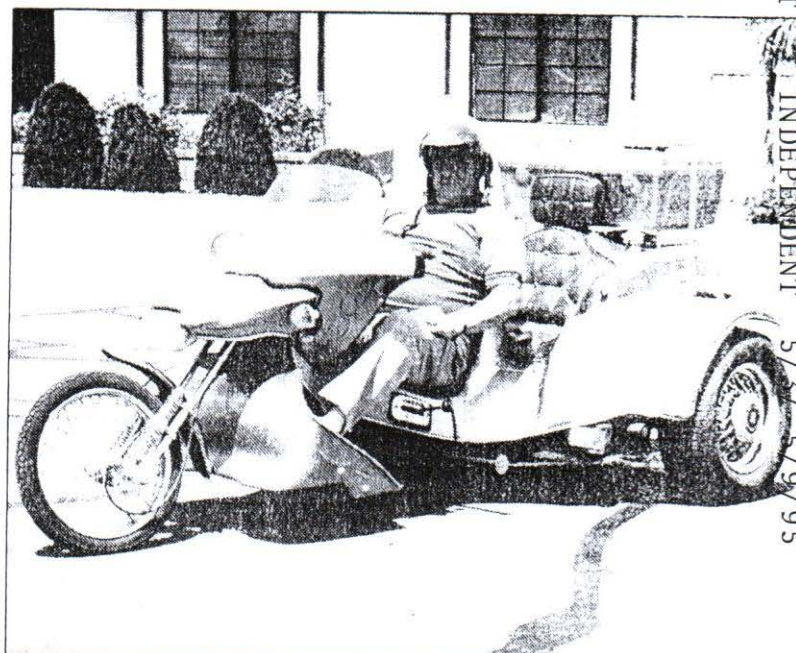


Photo by TERI CARNICELLI/Sun Cities Independent

King of the open road. Sun City West Bill Thorburn's homemade three-wheel motorcycle catches the eyes of those he passes by. The bike, fondly named "Good as Gold," has taken its owner throughout the United States and Europe.

No bus for now

Plans canceled after protests

By IAN MITCHELL
Daily News-Sun staff

A Sundome Plaza merchant has dropped plans to open a Sun City West contract bus station after receiving dozens of calls from residents opposing the idea.

Bob Riddle, owner and manager of Bob's V&S Variety Store, 13583 Camino del Sol, said the idea of opening a Greyhound Bus Lines station is "a dead issue."

In a Wednesday story in the Daily News-Sun, Riddle invited residents who had concerns about the bus-station proposal to call his store.

Riddle said he issued a news release Thursday to notify the public that there will be no bus station and to stem the flow of calls he's received.

"Bob has decided the negatives outweigh the positives," the release states. "He appreciates all those who have called for and against the bus stop. Bob feels the service is still needed in this area but believes that bus stop should be outside the Sun City West community."

Riddle said he wanted to provide a service to Sun Cities residents, but his proposal was misunderstood. Most who have called were against having a contract bus station in Sun City West because they wrongly think of a station as a large and seedy depot, he said.

Only four buses a day running a loop route between Phoenix and Las Vegas would have stopped at his store, he said.

Gwen Shoemaker, one of the Sundome Plaza tenants who objected to the bus station, said she was pleased that it has been canceled.

"That's good, because I think the traffic congestion itself here would be something we don't need," said Shoemaker, owner of Fashions For You. "It probably is a service that needs to be done, but it needs to be on Grand Avenue or Bell Road."

Arve Dahl, president of the Property Owners and Residents Association, said he received 50 phone calls about the proposed bus station since a Wednesday news story on the proposal. Forty-nine of the callers were against the idea, he said.

Dahl said traffic in Sundome Plaza would have been disrupted by a bus parked in front of the variety store. Sun City West residents won't miss the bus station, he said.

"The problem is we got all these buses where you can ride up there free when you're going to Laughlin and Vegas; the casinos up there provide the costs," Dahl said. "Round trip there (Greyhound) would cost 30 bucks, so it isn't all that big a deal for most of the citizens here."

Rick Selph, area customer service manager for Greyhound, could not be reached for comment Thursday afternoon or this morning.

Trolley car transports SCW visitors

By ROSA De SIMONE
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — A new mode of transportation, reserved for visitors, has come to Sun City West.

An old-fashioned trolley car, minus the tracks, motors around the community, taking visitors on 45-minute tours.

Del Webb Corp.'s "trolley tours" are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.

The trolley's drivers and hostesses are Sun City West residents.

"It was super," said Harlan Lessman, an Iowa resident in town for a about a month.

Harlan and his wife, Helen, took the tour Monday afternoon.

"You get to see a lot of what's going on and the length of the tour is just about right," Lessman said.

At the wheel Monday was Fred Kuhne, a nine-year Sun City West resident.

Kuhne squires visitors 3½ days a week.

"It's fun," Kuhne said. "It's as interesting as other things I do in the community."

But fun aside, Kuhne said he takes the responsibility of the passengers' welfare seriously.

"You have to keep your wits about you every single minute," he said.

Golf cars and pedestrians are major hazards drivers need to keep their eyes on, Kuhne said.

The number of visitors using the trolley daily varies, but lately has averaged about 70, said Sue Walker, supervisor of sales administration for Webb.

"No matter what the weather's like, we run; even if we have one passenger we run," Kuhne said.

With Kuhne taking care of the driving, "trolley hostess" Louise Takoushian gives the riders useful tidbits.

The trolley, which departs from Webb's sales pavilion at 13323 Meeker Blvd., traverses a route that includes the community's recreation centers, Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, golf courses and shopping district.

"You name it, they've got it," Takoushian told the visitors during the tour.

The free trolley tours will run through March, said Connie Watson, public relations assistant for Webb.

'We wanted for the people who were visiting the model home center to have an opportunity to see more of the community. And it also gives them a chance to see the recreation centers because the trolley stops at each one.'

Connie Watson
Public relations assistant
Del Webb Corp.

"We wanted for the people who were visiting the model home center to have an opportunity to see more of the community," Watson said. "And it also gives them a chance to see the recreation centers because the trolley stops at each one."

If demand is high, the tours may continue through Easter weekend, she said.

"We wanted something unique-looking; it's been received very well and people are very complimentary about the tours," Walker said.



trolley driver Fred Kuhne waits curbside for passengers to gather for a tour of Sun City West. The

trolley, which runs Monday through Saturday, takes visitors on a 45-minute tour of the community.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Trolley tour hostess Louise Takoushian uses a bullhorn to speak above the drone of the trolley. Riders on the tour include, Michael and Catherine Buttigieg of Floral Park Long Island, N.Y., left, and Sara Smith of Crete Ill.

Road to nowhere

Confusion delays completion of Deer Valley Road

By **TERI CARNICELLI**
Sun Cities Independent

As Del Webb prepares to put the finishing touches on Sun City West in anticipation of its departure from the community, one of the few projects left to be completed is the construction of the road leading off into the sunset.

Residents and company officials have waited a long time for the convenience of a connector road from Deer Valley Road to Grand Avenue, two of the four roads bordering the community. And it looks like they are going to have to wait a little longer.

Sun City West is bordered by four roads — Bell Road, El Mirage Road, Deer Valley Road and Grand Avenue. Deer Valley Road and Grand Avenue are supposed to intersect in the far northwest corner of the community.

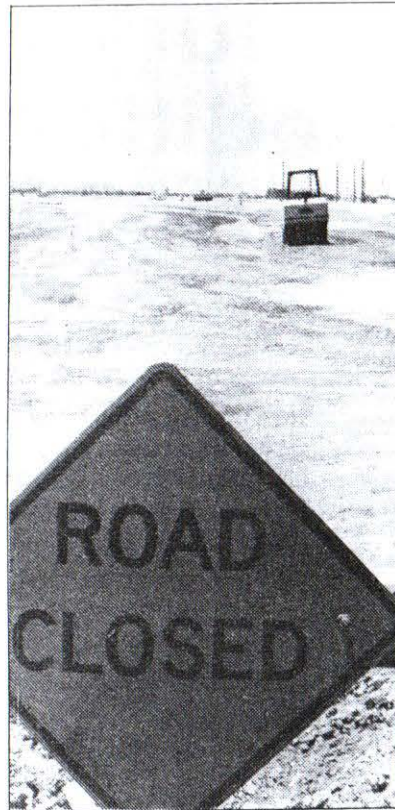
That connection, however, has failed to materialize due primarily to delays in the installation of a railway crossing guard and the construction of county roads leading up to Grand Avenue from the west.

Deer Valley Road, constructed north of Sun City West by the Webb Corporation, stops short of the Grand Avenue crossing guard. Santa Fe Railroad is responsible for installing a temporary crossing guard before construction on the road can continue to Grand Avenue.

According to Greg Holverson, acting chief of the Transportation Planning Division for the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, Santa Fe is "being a little bit difficult."

The county has agreed to build a stretch of road extending the 303 Loop, otherwise known as the Estrella Freeway, to Lake Pleasant. Mr. Holverson, who spoke at the Sun City West 2000 workshop in April regarding the construction, said the county has divided the extension into two phases.

Phase One will encompass the area from Grand Avenue to the realigned Deer Valley Road with an interim, or temporary, connector road. The interim road will eventually be replaced by the extended



Del Webb Corp. is busy completing Deer Valley Road. Just when the road will connect with Grand Avenue, however, is anyone's guess.

freeway.

Phase Two will continue to the freeway to Lake Pleasant.

A lack of county funds is slowing the road's construction, and Santa Fe officials say it will be some time before they can install a crossing guard.

"The actual interim road is in the county's five-year plan, at the back end of it, to continue (the 303) over to 99th Avenue," says Chuck Roach, Del Webb's general manager for Sun City West.

"The county has agreed to build (Phase One) early in order to get (Del Webb Corp.'s) connection completed."

Railroad officials, on the hand, are disturbed by the early construction, according to Mike Martin, spokesman for Santa Fe Railroad.

Mr. Martin says the county is violating the Arizona Corporation Commission's directive to complete Phase Two prior to constructing Phase One.

See ■ DEER VALLEY, Page 3

over

■ DEER VALLEY

From Page 1

"We are concerned because the county has decided to circumvent that order by going ahead with construction to Deer Valley Road," Mr. Martin explains.

According to Mike Dawson, acting manager of Environmental Planning for MCDOT, the county intends to build the interim road in 1995-96 and the remaining eight miles (Phase Two) to Lake Pleasant Road in 1997-98.

"For us it's a matter of design time and funding allocations," Mr. Dawson says.

The eight miles of road from Deer Valley to Lake Pleasant will cost the county approximately \$3.5 million, and that is not available in next year's budget, Mr. Dawson says.

The \$800,000 necessary to build the connector road, however, is available.

The county also needs to complete a design concept for the eight miles, which is expected to take nine months.

It could be perhaps another year before that concept is actually finalized on paper, Mr. Dawson explains.

"We just wouldn't be able to construct it before 1997," Mr. Dawson says.

The Del Webb Corp., which plans on pulling out of Sun City West by 1996, would be leaving behind a road to nowhere if the county delayed construction of the interim road until after it completed the extension to Lake Pleasant.

Santa Fe officials would like the extra time to prepare for their part of the construction project.

In terms of liability, the railroad would prefer the county wait before building Phase One to allow less time for potential accidents to occur, Mr. Martin explains.

"The county, the Corporation Commission and Del Webb have worked together basically to require Santa Fe to put (an at-grade crossing) in," Mr. Roach says.

"That doesn't mean they don't get a case of the slows."

Mr. Martin sees it as an issue of safety.

"The later it goes in, the less liability exposure there is to all parties concerned for a potential collision between a train and a vehicle."

Mr. Martin says there are other considerations — among them the fact that electronic warning devices, such as gauge lights and flashers one normally sees at crossings, must be ordered individually.

"There's usually between six months and a year (waiting period) to get that equipment," Mr. Martin says.

"After that, people (from Santa Fe) have to go and set up the equipment, and that has to be scheduled quite a bit in advance" as the employees have other obligations.

It could be, at the earliest, a year from now before the crossing will be ready to accommodate traffic, he explains. But he anticipates it will be much longer.

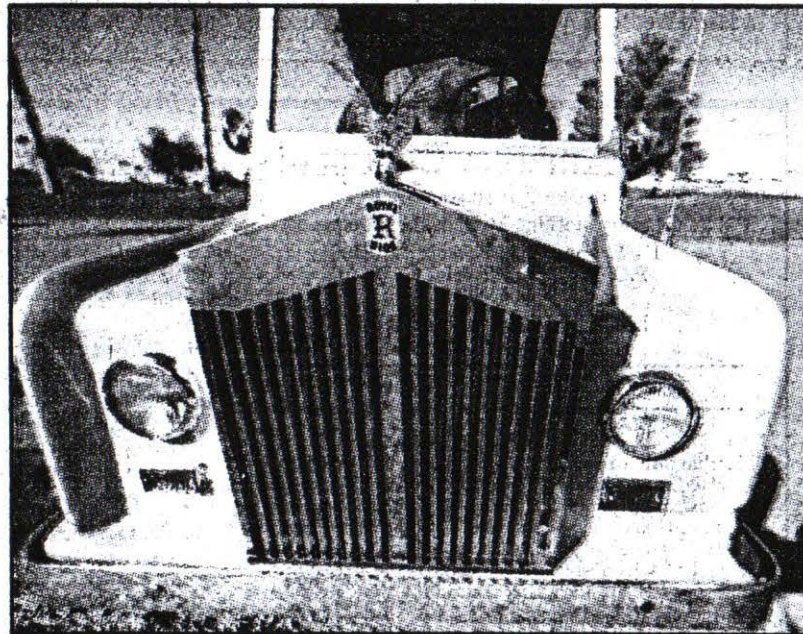
Even if the county's interim road is ready before that time, in all likelihood traffic will not be able to cross over to Deer Valley Road until all warning lights and safety equipment are installed, Mr. Martin says.

The extension of Deer Valley Road, which has been under construction for more than two years,

will be finished within the next year to year-and-a-half, according to Mr. Roach.

Deer Valley Road has been extended to 151st Avenue, and has about one mile left to go before it reaches the empty area where the crossing and the connector road will one day be.

This is not your everyday, ordinary golf cart. Al Geissler's cart not only has power — this baby can get up to 30 mph — it looks sharp, too. "I drive down the street, and people wave, and I wave back. It's a neat way to travel," says Geissler, a retired automobile and farm-machinery dealer who now lives in Sun City West.



Charles Krejcsi/The Arizona Republic

KINGS OF ROAD IN SUN CITIES

Carts not just for golfers

By Fred Smith
The Arizona Republic

When Al Geissler tees it up at Briarwood Country Club in Sun City West, people gawk.

But the stares he gets aren't necessarily for his booming drives — rather, they're for what he drives.

For even in a community where the golf cart is a favored mode of transportation off the links as well as on, Geissler's stands grille and

sunroof above the rest.

It has a state-of-the-art chassis, a walnut dash with a built-in cooling fan, neatly upholstered bucket seats and an AM-FM radio with cassette deck. All this, and a gas-powered engine that will propel the cart at speeds of up to 30 mph, are contained within a burgundy-and-gray body that looks strikingly like a Rolls-Royce.

It's one of the swankiest golf

— See GOLF, page A10

Golf carts king of the road in Sun Cities

— GOLF, from page A1

carts in the twin retirement communities of Sun City and Sun City West, which have nearly 55,000 residents and at least 5,700 registered carts. But that number doesn't tell the full story because many of the "golf cars" are driven by people who have never set hands on a 9-iron.

"I guess some people would think it's ridiculous to spend \$9,400 on a golf cart," said Geissler, 65, a retired automobile and farm-machinery dealer who has divided his time between Valley City, N.D., and Sun City West since 1979.

"But I think it was money well spent. It's comfortable and dependable and doesn't cost an arm and a leg to keep it that way.

"I drive down the street, and people wave, and I wave back. It's a neat way to travel."

Many of Geissler's neighbors would agree. They use their carts as second cars, taking them out on the streets to recreation centers, groceries and churches.

Sheer numbers are hard to come by, although one gauge is a permit

system that entitles cart owners to drive on the communities' two golf courses. A permit costs \$165 a year in Sun City West and \$125 in Sun City. At last count, there were 3,096 golf-cart registrations in Sun City and 2,625 in Sun City West.

However, that may be telling only two-thirds of the story, according to John McIntosh, who operates Sun City Golf Cars in Youngtown.

"In the last few years, fully one-third of the cars I'm selling are to people who don't play golf," he said. "These folks are like a lot of people who move to Sun City from a colder climate and bring two cars with them.

"It doesn't take them long to realize they don't need that second car, so they sell it and buy a golf car.

"And if I may say so, I think it's a wise investment. These cars can get into a tight parking space and don't pollute. You fill 'em up (with gasoline if the car is gasoline powered) once a month, and your insurance costs \$100 a year."

'What do I need 2 cars for?'

The garage of full-time Sun City West residents Jack and Doris Taylor

is typical of those with one automobile and one golf cart. The couple live near the Hillcrest Golf Course.

"What do I need two cars for?" asked Jack Taylor, 78.

"This golf car (a 1982 Yamaha that Taylor bought for \$3,300) will go anywhere I want to go. The only reason I get out the big car is to keep the juices flowing in it."

Taylor figures he is the prototype Sun Cities golf-car driver. He plays golf four days a week, drives the Yamaha to the grocery store and community swimming pool and fills its 6-gallon fuel tank twice a month.

He also figures he is typical in that he never has had an accident with the cart in traffic, although he once had a close call on a golf course.

1 golf-cart-related fatality

Not everyone has been so lucky, according to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. Officers can relate numerous mishaps and near mishaps involving run-ins between golf carts and the real thing on the streets of the two unincorporated communities.

There has been one golf-cart-related fatality this year, according to Duane

Brady, a Sheriff's Office spokesman. The accident occurred Jan. 7, when a Sun City woman fell out of a golf cart after it was struck by an automobile at 105th and Peoria avenues. The woman died of head injuries Jan. 14.

But McIntosh said such accidents are far from the minds of those who buy carts these days. They can pay as little as \$500 for a good used one, or around \$3,500 for a new one that is street legal with lights, a windshield and a top, or up to \$10,000 for a luxury version.

McIntosh has delved into a bit of golf-cart history. He believes the first ones date back to the mid-1950s. He remembers the first one he saw, at age 5, in 1958. It was at a Chicago course owned at the time by his father, Jock McIntosh, who now runs Southwest Golf Cars Inc. in Sun City West.

"He bought just one," John McIntosh said, "not knowing if it would go over. ... And now, look what we have, manufacturers in the United States, Japan and even Poland."

And a golf cart, at least on the streets of Sun City or Sun City West, hardly draws a second glance.

But not Al Geissler's. His is a different story.



Geissler's cart includes a holder for his golf tees, as well as a state-of-the-art chassis, a walnut dash, bucket seats and an AM-FM radio with cassette deck.

Jack Taylor (left) and Al Geissler stop for a chat in a supermarket parking lot in Sun City West. The two are like a lot of folks in Sun City and Sun City West. They drive their carts on the communities' two golf courses and take them on the streets to recreation centers, grocery stores and churches.



Charles Krejcsi/The Arizona Republic

The Arizona Republic

Wednesday, August 28, 1985 NW

Road board refuses to act on Webb 115 Avenue plan

By PAMELA MANSON
Arizona Republic Staff

Where 115th Avenue will lead and how wide it will be is uncertain after members of the Maricopa County Highway Advisory Board expressed their objections to a proposal to extend the roadway.

The Del E. Webb Development Co. has asked the county to build the eastern side of 115th Avenue from Bell to Beardsley roads, a distance of two miles. That side of the avenue is dirt and in the county.

The western side or a half-width of 115th Avenue, which is in Surprise, is paved. This half of the avenue was constructed by Mountain View Development Co. of Phoenix, which is building the Brookview County Club between Bell and Beardsley along 115th.

Webb officials have offered to share in the cost, which is undetermined, of building the eastern side of the avenue.

At a meeting last week, board members put the company's request on hold and suggested that current plans concerning 115th Avenue remain unchanged.

The county plans to build only one-fourth mile of the eastern half of 115th Avenue going north from Bell to provide better access to Arizona State University/Sun Cities Education and Research Center and the new Sun Cities Art Museum. The road work is slated for completion early next year.

The 40-acre campus — where construction will begin next year — is at Bell Road and 115th Avenue; the museum is adjacent to it. Both parcels were donated by the develop-

ment company, a subsidiary of the Del E. Webb Corp.

"Building the road that far (one-fourth mile) would provide access to ASU and the art museum," Clare Felstead, highway-board chairman, said. "Beyond that, though, we'd be serving individuals."

A Del E. Webb spokesman said the road construction would benefit not only the company but Sun City residents.

Spokesman Ken Plonski said, "We're looking to extend the road for a couple of reasons. First, we still own 300 acres on the east side of 115th Avenue. A road would make the land more attractive."

"Second, the sand and gravel we use comes from a pit on the Agua Fria River. Paving the road would cut down on the dust around the east border of Sun City."

Richard A. Mastin, vice president of land development for Webb, said the company also has found more financial support for the work.

Company officials have discussed the project with the owner of Pleasant Valley Crushing, who operates a sand-and-gravel pit on Beardsley and 115th Avenue. The owner is willing to share in the cost, Mastin said in an Aug. 16 letter to the county highway department.

Details on the portion each company would be willing to pay for the construction still are being worked out, Plonski said.

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors has the final say on road construction. The matter has yet to be placed on a board agenda.

Sun Cities groups oppose Bell Road loop alignment

By CHERYL SWEET
Staff Writer

Leaders of Sun Cities homeowners groups banded together Monday to discuss alternate routes to a proposed outer loop expressway around the Valley.

Property Owners and Residents Association president Loise Copes called the meeting "a new era of cooperation between the sister cities."

Home Owners Association president Betty van Fredenberg told representatives from Maricopa County and the Maricopa Association of Governments that retirees oppose a Bell Road alignment for the loop. "This whole concept is totally unacceptable to the people who live here. We can see all kinds of problems."

THE LOOP tentatively is proposed to run north from Interstate 10 along 99th Avenue, across a northern align-

ment—Bell Road, Paradise Lane or Beardsley Road—to Pima Road, continuing south to the Superstition Freeway.

A Bell Road alignment would begin at 67th Avenue and run east to Pima Road. Although the loop would miss Sun City, residents say it would increase traffic by encouraging motorists to continue west on Bell Road to Grand Avenue on their way to Wickenburg or other locations.

HOA director George Hartman said the alignments under consideration would not meet traffic needs in the area once the loop is built. Construction isn't expected for at least 10 years. Hartman recommended the loop be built farther west and north to meet future growth and to prevent uprooting of residents and businesses.

"WE ALLOW structures to go up and then we tear them down by putting

in access ways. Now would seem the time to go farther north," he said, suggesting a road that "doesn't require any major condemnation of property."

MAG planner Bryah Patterson said Bell Road is being considered as an "interim" solution until outlying areas are developed and transportation demands warrant construction of a more permanent solution, such as a freeway.

A freeway employs the use of interchanges, rather than traffic signals, Patterson explained. Currently, a freeway would be too expensive—costing about \$450 million to connect the west to the east—and wouldn't be used to capacity in the sparsely populated northern Valley region, Patterson said.

COUNTY ENGINEER Bob Esterbrooks said he favors Beardsley Road for the northern alignment. "Our recommendation is to follow this align-

ment and acquire the right of way at this time. We feel strongly that we need something more than an interim improvement."

County Supervisor Hawley Atkinson, District 4, said the county has historically been inadequate in providing long-term solutions to problems.

"One of the major deficiencies in Maricopa County has been the lack of long-range planning. Bell Road could have been an ideal route in long-range planning" 15 to 20 years ago.

Several northwest Valley residents living near Bell Road also attended and expressed support for an alignment near Beardsley.

MAG is expected to make a recommendation to the state Department of Transportation by the end of April. DOT will then hold public hearings before it makes a final decision.

Westers' bus system finds few takers

By FRAN SMITH
Staff Writer

2-19-81

A struggle over the Sun City West bus system is under way.

Neither the Del E. Webb Development Co. nor the members of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West want the buses or the financial responsibility that goes with them.

Ridership "fluctuates" so much that no figures are available, according to a Webb spokesman.

A PUBLIC HEARING on Webb's request that the buses be transferred to the Rec Centers is set for April 1.

Webb has the system now but wants to be rid of it. Rec Centers members are looking at the truly non-profit nature of the buses' operation and saying, "No, thank you."

The first hearing before the Arizona

Corporation Commission had been scheduled for Feb. 13 but was postponed. Rec Centers members attending complained that legal notification of the hearing was published only in The Record Reporter, a Maricopa County publication not circulated in the Sun City area, and that they had not had time to muster arguments against Webb's petition.

WESTER DR. LEO Klein is mustering this week and will be busy between now and April 1 collecting signatures on a petition opposing the requested transfer. He hopes that, with help, he'll gather 1,000.

"That bus system is not provided out of Webb's goodness of heart," Klein says. "It's here so they can make sales. We're not selling anything. We don't need it."

Klein's petition cites the facilities agreement that rec members sign which calls for members "to pay the cost of operating, maintaining and developing the common community recreational facilities at Sun City West" and makes no mention of a bus line. He says the buses would operate at a "heavy financial deficit," would never break even and are of use to less than 1 percent of the membership of the Recreation Centers.

A WEBB SPOKESMAN explains that the company wants to avoid the mistake of keeping Sun City Westers dependent on its developer over the "long term."

The bus system is mentioned in the articles of incorporation for the Recreation Centers. The company has agreed to continue to subsidize the Recreation

Centers until that organization is self-supporting and so will continue to subsidize the buses' money-losing operation even if the Rec Centers acquire the system, a Webb spokesman said.

Consisting of two vans, one with 12-passenger capacity and another with a 15-passenger capacity, the system operates along temporary routes which include the residential areas of Sun City West, the business core and two trips daily to the medical offices on Thunderbird Avenue in Sun City.

Anyone wanting to intervene officially in the petition should notify the Arizona Corporation Commission before the public hearing. However, any citizen who wants to make a statement will be heard, a Commission spokesman said.

no date

SUN CITY WEST BUS LINE

SUN CITY SHUTTLE ROUTE

CRESTVIEW	8:30	9:40	10:50	12:00	1:10	2:20
BELL CAMINO	8:38	9:48	10:58	12:08	1:18	2:28
GREENWAY	8:44	9:54	11:04	12:14	1:24	2:34
THUNDERBIRD PLAZA	8:48	9:58	11:08	12:18	1:28	2:38
LAKEVIEW MEDICAL	} 8:54	10:04	11:14	12:24	1:34	2:44
BOSWELL HOSPITAL						
THUNDERBIRD MEDICAL						
GRAND CENTER						
LA RONDE	9:04	10:14	11:24	12:34	1:44	2:54
BELL CAMINO	9:11	10:21	11:31	12:41	1:51	3:01
BELL CAMINO	9:21	10:31	11:41	12:51	2:01	3:11
CRESTVIEW	9:31	10:41	11:51	1:01	2:11	*3:21

* Passengers on final run from Sun City will be delivered to nearest route point to their destination.

Transfers available only from Sun City West buses to Sun City West buses.

FOR INFORMATION, CALL 974-7516

FARE: 35¢

10 rides - \$3.00
20 rides - \$5.00

SUN CITY WEST BUS LINES

RESIDENTIAL SCHEDULE

CRESTVIEW	8:30	9:40	10:50	12:00	1:10	2:20
MEEKER & TERRAZO	8:32	9:42	10:52	12:02	1:12	2:22
130TH AVENUE & JADESTONE	8:33	9:43	10:53	12:03	1:13	2:23
128TH & MARBLE	8:35	9:45	10:55	12:05	1:15	2:25
130TH & JADESTONE	8:38	9:48	10:58	12:08	1:18	2:28
132ND & BEECHWOOD	8:40	9:50	11:00	12:10	1:20	2:30
BONANZA & 132ND DRIVE	8:41	9:51	11:01	12:11	1:21	2:31
KEYSTONE & CAMINO DEL SOL	8:43	9:53	11:03	12:13	1:23	2:33
133RD AVENUE & ASHWOOD	8:44	9:54	11:04	12:14	1:24	2:34
132ND AVENUE & DESERT GLEN	8:46	9:56	11:06	12:16	1:26	2:36
MAPLEWOOD & 133RD AVENUE	8:47	9:57	11:07	12:17	1:27	2:37
R. H. JOHNSON & 132ND AVENUE	8:48	9:58	11:08	12:18	1:28	2:38
KODIAK & OPAL	8:49	9:59	11:09	12:19	1:29	2:39
HYACINTH & 135TH AVENUE	8:50	10:00	11:10	12:20	1:30	2:40
SPANISH GARDENS & WHISPERING OAKS	8:52	10:02	11:12	12:22	1:32	2:42
130TH AVENUE & SPANISH GARDENS	8:54	10:04	11:14	12:24	1:34	2:44
128TH AVENUE & DESERT GLEN	8:55	10:05	11:15	12:25	1:35	2:45
DESERT GLEN & 134TH DRIVE	8:57	10:07	11:17	12:27	1:37	2:47
COPPERSTONE & 133RD AVENUE	8:58	10:08	11:18	12:28	1:38	2:48
CASTLEROCK & CAMINO DEL SOL	8:59	10:09	11:19	12:29	1:39	2:49
133RD AVENUE & STAR RIDGE	9:00	10:10	11:20	12:30	1:40	2:50
PROSPECT & CAMINO DEL SOL	9:01	10:11	11:21	12:31	1:41	2:51
CRESTVIEW	9:02	10:12	11:22	12:32	1:42	2:52
R. H. JOHNSON RECREATION CENTER	9:05	10:15	11:25	12:35	1:45	2:55
ENCORE MODEL HOMES	9:07	10:17	11:27	12:37	1:47	2:57
CRESTVIEW	9:34	10:44	11:54	1:04	2:14	3:24

SUN CITY WEST BUS LINES

Schedules run continuously Monday through Saturday
(EXCEPT HOLIDAYS) beginning at 8:30 a.m. All times
listed are approximate and could vary a few minutes either way.

Developer runs SCW bus--for now

Sun City West's bus lines, inaugurated Feb. 20, currently is operated by the developer, Del E. Webb Development Co.

However, Webb has announced that it will turn over operation of the bus line to the Sun City West recreation centers association.

Webb's apparent aim is to avoid the Sun City situation, in which the developer has been stuck with operating a deficit-ridden bus line because the Rec Centers of Sun City can't or won't.

The Property Owners and Residents Association, Sun City West's community organization, has not discussed the transportation question to date. PORA members have been involved primarily in getting the organization established.

The Sun City West bus line runs 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Saturday, making a trip around the community each hour. The bus spends 28 minutes at

Webb's model home area, making it possible for potential home buyers to get a tour of the community.

Fares for the Sun City West bus, which now operates as a van and not as a full-sized bus, are 35 cents per ride, with discounts of 10 rides for \$3 and 20 rides for \$5 available. The fares are the same as in Sun City.

No transportation link exists now between Sun City and Sun City West, and a spokesman for the developer said no such intra-city link is planned.



Del E. Webb Development Co. wants to stop running its familiar buses and let another body take over transportation in Sun City. But a host of legal complications must be confronted before those dual goals can be achieved. (News-Sun Photo)



DEDICATION

BELL ROAD BRIDGE

DECEMBER 8, 1981

10:00 A.M.

PROGRAM

Prelude

Presentation of Colors.....832nd Air Division
Luke Air Force Base

Pledge of Allegiance.....Hawley Atkinson
District 4 Supervisor

Invocation.....Robert Duff, Pastor
Church of the Palms

Introduction of Hawley Atkinson
Distinguished Guests.....District 4 Supervisor

Remarks.....Murray Karsten
County Highway Commission

 Eldon Davidson
County Highway Commission

Musical Selection.....Peoria High School Band
John McCord, Band Director

Dedicatory Address.....Fred Koory, Jr.
District 3 Supervisor

Ribbon Cutting

Hot Air Balloon "Xanadu" courtesy of Jim &
Vickie Peek

MARICOPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Tom Freestone, Chairman
George Campbell, District 2
Fred Koory, Jr., District 3
Hawley Atkinson, District 4
Ed Pastor, District 5

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William G. Arthur, Member
Mario Herrera, Member
Murray Karsten, Member
Eldon Davidson, Member

COUNTY MANAGER

Robert G. Mauney

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS & COUNTY ENGINEER

Robert C. Esterbrooks

DESIGN ENGINEER

Benson and Gerdin, Inc.

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR

The Tanner Companies