

TOWN HALL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2007  
TOPIC: ROADS IN TONTO HILLS  
GUESTS: MCDOT REPRESENTATIVES

THIA President Rick Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:35. Guest speakers from Maricopa County Department of Transportation included Richard Wallace, Junior Coronado, and Frank Urquiza.

Mr. Wallace provided a brief overview of the history of Tonto Hills roads. The 1960 plat indicated that paved roads were not a requirement. In 1972, Maricopa County adopted a paved road standard, but Tonto Hills' unpaved roads were grandfathered in. Mr. Wallace noted that Maricopa County is only required to pave roads based on the PM10 program, which relates to air quality and dust abatement. The County estimates that the PM10 threshold is met by 150 vehicles per day. Once that threshold is met, paving is required. Consequently, based on counts obtained in July, 2006 (??????) and PM10 requirements, MCDOT will be paving a portion of Old Mine Rd. up to Sombrero Rd. sometime before July, 2008.

Mr. Wallace reported that MCDOT's operating budget for PM10 is three million dollars a year. He estimated it cost approximately a million dollars a mile to pave, though chip sealing is a bit cheaper. Tonto Hills has 7 miles of unpaved roads. Additional challenges such as engineering and hillside issues, drainage, washes, and the decomposed granite that comprises Tonto Hills roads may push costs even higher. Mr. Wallace observed that a tour of Tonto Hills revealed the effects of 47 years of grading, resulting in a lower roadbed. He claimed that spot improvements are necessary, and material will have to be brought in to raise the roadbed. At least two dozen problem areas will have to be looked at on a case by case basis, according to Wallace. Remedial action to repair roadbed will have to involve material that compacts well and has structural stability such as ABC, lime-stabilized base (cement-type), or asphalt millings. (????????)

Road surface improvement options include chip-seal, which would cost approximately three million dollars in construction (about \$700,000 per mile for a two lane road), plus engineering and localized drainage solutions, totaling probably four and half million for the project. It would have to be phased in over time, with areas of high maintenance being addressed first. There are no current plans to do this. Another option is for the community to form an improvement district. Tonto Hills could then apply for grant money, explore cost sharing with the County, or pay out of pocket to improve roads. Mr. Wallace claims federal money is no longer available.

Mr. Wallace asserted that if County fails to meet PM10 standards, federal sanctions are levied, and more federal money is lost. Currently, the County paves approximately 10 miles of dirt roads per year. Next year, 15 streets are scheduled to be paved. About 500 miles of County roads remain unpaved. Regarding which roads get priority, Mr. Wallace explained that three million dollars is set aside for low-volume dirt roads. Decisions are

made based on traffic volume, simplicity of the job, and the amount of roads in that district that are already paved

To figure PM10 based on traffic counts, the County generally considers an average of 10 trips per day per household. However, Mr. Wallace acknowledged that number may be too high for Tonto Hills. He also acknowledged that traffic counters can be tampered with to produce unreliable results. Still, Mr. Wallace pointed out that the traffic counts were "surprisingly close" two years in a row for Tonto Hills. Though PM10 can be affected by factors other than traffic, vehicular traffic is the primary component MCDOT looks at to determine PM10. Mr. Wallace stated EPA ratings of airborne particulates can influence which roads get paved, but that no air quality/particulate evaluation has been performed in Tonto Hills. Mr. Wallace claimed that property owners could request an air quality analysis from the Maricopa County Air Quality Department (?????? Environmental Dept.? ). They have mobile monitoring stations that can take air quality readings. He added that they take measurements during peak traffic times and often cite violations. Mr. Wallace also noted, however, that he was uncertain whether the results of such readings would supercede traffic counts.

In response to questions, Mr. Wallace offered the following additional information. Resurfacing the roads using a lime material would cost approximately \$408,000. The lime suppresses dust, but it also hardens, causing water to run faster. Where water crosses the road, the County can utilize concrete. In terms of when repair work can begin, Mr. Wallace reported that MCDOT is still playing catch-up from summer rain damage, and would not be able to start working in Tonto Hills until the first part of 2008. Currently, it costs \$3,000 per mile per year to grade our roads, using two operators (blade, water truck). Mr. Wallace noted there is a cost per mile for paved roads as well. In response to a question regarding the impact on dirt driveways if the roads were paved, Mr. Wallace replied that a culvert or pipe may have to be installed, or the base of the driveway may have to be paved, at property owner's expense. Another question centered on the condition and maintenance of the chip sealing at the front entrance. Mr. Wallace reported that running water typically brings decomposed granite onto the road, and his crews can sweep that roadway more than once a year, but his department has recently been in flux. They only have two County sweepers and one contractor. Mr. Wallace suggested that ATVs also cause damage to the chip seal.

Mr. Wallace noted that a typical road in Tonto Hills would be 14 feet wide, with seven-foot shoulders on either side.

Mr. Wallace reported that MCDOT has some flexibility to delay any road paving until after utility lines have been repaired.

Mr. Wallace reported that he does the work while the Transportation Advisory Board makes the decisions. Tonto Hills is in District 2; Mr. Stapley is our supervisor. Ronny Strickland is the person in charge of grant money.

In answer to a question regarding a rise in temperature if the roads are paved, Mr. Wallace asserted that asphalt generates a surface temperature of 170 degrees, whereas chip seal radiates about 140 to 150 degrees, and lime radiates the least heat of the three surfaces.

Mr. Wallace reported that though lime is less expensive initially, it is more expensive over a lifetime. Other ways to suppress dust (tree saps, etc.) have to be re-applied every six months, and such lack of longevity renders them not economical.

In answer to a query regarding whether or not chip-sealing will devalue our properties, Mr. Wallace answered that MCDOT puts the chip-seal down; the homeowners have to take care of it.

Mr. Wallace again acknowledged the importance of repairing our roads to mitigate the exposure of utility lines. And again he emphasized the importance of properly engineering the roads to manage run-off.