

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
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CHAIR EMERITUS

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May 1, 2024

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing
and Urban Development

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing
and Urban Development

Dear Chair Womack and Ranking Member Quigley,

I am requesting \$3,432,676 under Fiscal Year 25 for Santa Cruz County under the Department of Transportation (DOT) Highway Infrastructure Projects for the West Frontage Road at Yavapai Drive Intersection Improvements project.

The funding will be used to improve multimodal operations at the intersection of Yavapai Drive / Rio Rico Drive and the I-19 West Frontage Road. A Project Assessment (PA) will be prepared to determine the optimal intersection traffic control; then the recommended modifications will be fully designed and constructed. The intersection of Yavapai Drive / Rio Rico drive and West Frontage Road is located between the Rio Rico Drive interchange on I-19 approximately 300 feet to the east, and the Camino Caralampi / Rio Rico Shopping Center intersection approximately 400 feet to the west. Yavapai Drive curves toward the northwest between the West Frontage Road intersection and the Camino Caralampi / Rio Rico Shopping Center intersection, causing major site distance issues at the project intersection. The combination of high traffic volumes between the interchange and the shopping center and the limited site distance causes drivers turning towards the interchange to experience extreme delay. To avoid this, many drivers choose to detour off of West Frontage Road—the only major collector in the region—onto Yavapai Drive—a residential collector—where they intersect approximately 0.6 miles north of the project intersection. Improving the intersection of Yavapai Drive / Rio Rico Drive and West Frontage Road would improve traffic flow and safety in the area, and create a more pleasant roadway environment for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

This project is a good use of taxpayer money because the West Frontage Road corridor is the primary trafficway in the Rio Rico community, and nearly all the major traffic generators in Rio Rico lie on the West Frontage Road corridor—several schools, the only major landfill in Santa Cruz County, the only U.S. Post Office in Rio Rico, the only medical facility in Rio Rico, and most of the community dining and shopping options. Because of this, congestion and safety issues anywhere on West Frontage Road can have a dramatic effect on the rest of the network. The delay faced by drivers attempting to access the I-19 interchange from West Frontage Road

has greatly impacted the surrounding network by encouraging many drivers to bypass the intersection using a residential collector loop. In addition to congestion issues, the existing intersection does not adequately serve non-vehicular users such as pedestrians and cyclists, and the facilities at the project intersection do not comply with ADA design guidelines. Any recommended improvement would take these issues into consideration and allow the County to increase accessibility for all users.

This is a construction project on a highway, which is eligible under 23 USC 133(b)(1)(A). This project meets all requirements, is shovel ready, and can obligate funds within a year. The county has set aside \$375,000 of local funds (approximately 10% of total project costs) to cover the required 5.7% local match, the ADOT Review Fee, and unforeseen expenses. Although obtaining funds to complete the entire project is a priority for Santa Cruz County, the County is open to receiving a reduced amount of \$1,082,904 to complete the PA, environmental review, and final design—\$150,000 to complete the PA and \$932,904 to complete the environmental review and final design. This project is not currently on the STIP/TIP. However, the project has been discussed with the SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization (SEAGO). They have provided a letter confirming eligibility and verifying that it will be placed on the TIP at the May 16, 2024 meeting.

Community partners in support of this project include Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors, City of Nogales, SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organizations, Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District No. 35, Greater Nogales Santa Cruz Port Authority, Nogales-Santa Cruz County Chamber of Commerce, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas, West and SouthEast REALTORS of the Valley, among others.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress