

VERDE CONNECT DECISION

– Message from Supervisor Donna Michaels –

As many of you are aware, the Verde Connect project was a key issue that I addressed in my campaign for Supervisor. At the first Board of Supervisor meeting on January 6th, I made a motion to cancel the project, which was passed unanimously.

In brief, here is a quick summary of key points that guided our decision.



1. **Going forward with this project would be fiscally irresponsible.** Estimates to complete the project would require County taxpayer funding of \$21M or more, in addition to the grant, which would eliminate funding for other more needed road projects. ADOT classified this project as mid- to long-term, not of immediate importance, and in its 2016 Verde Valley Master Plan called it “Not needed if Cornville Rd is widened...”.
2. **The \$25 million Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grant application for the Verde Connect included statements that, after subsequent evaluation, overstated the actual benefits of the project**– importantly traffic congestion relief. [See traffic count projections](#).
3. **Citizen response played a key role in changing the Board’s perspective.** 84% of citizens opposed this project according to a published Verde Independent poll, as did municipalities and fire districts.
 - Over 1,780 petition signatures collected by the Middle Verde neighborhood opposed the project.
 - Camp Verde Town Council opposed unanimously: Resolution 2019-1028.
 - Yavapai Apache Nation stated in a letter (June 17, 2019) that the project would not be allowed on their lands, even though

the stated benefit of the project was to connect the “divided” Yavapai Apache Nation.

- Beaver Creek Community Association stated in a letter to the Board of Supervisors (June 24, 2019) that they were unanimously opposed. Camp Verde, Beaver Creek and the Yavapai Apache Nation are three of the communities most impacted by the proposed project.
- The City of Cottonwood initiated a resolution of support, but citizen input records and meeting agenda notes reflect that there were no votes of support, so it was dropped (agenda minutes available online).
- Town of Clarkdale also attempted to pass a resolution of support, but the citizen opposition stopped the effort (agenda minutes available online).
- Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District met in an attempt to rally support, but encountered mixed sentiment, so no support was given
([https://www.verdenews.com/news/2020/dec/01/copper-canyon-fire-board-deadlocked-verde-connect/?cvbugle-story%20\(cvbugle-story\)](https://www.verdenews.com/news/2020/dec/01/copper-canyon-fire-board-deadlocked-verde-connect/?cvbugle-story%20(cvbugle-story))).
- 84% opposition in Journal polls.

4. **The Environmental Assessment failed to consider the full extent of environmental impact to the remote and pristine section of the Verde River and Coconino National Forest selected for the bridge and road.** Adverse safety, agricultural integrity, human environment and economic effects on the Town of Camp Verde, the neighborhood of Middle Verde and the citizens of the Verde Valley were not fully captured.

I want to emphasize my commitment to road improvement and forward-looking solutions that address our current and anticipated traffic congestion issues. As a resident of the Village of Oak Creek, I personally contend with one of the Verde Valley’s most oppressive logjams on a daily basis. We must address these issues with care and ensure that your hard-earned tax dollars are used for improvements that effectively address high priority problems.

Donna Michaels

Yavapai County Supervisor, District 3