

Nov. 18, 2014

Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, staff and public,

I'm Dave Perry, president and CEO of the Greater Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce, and a resident of Oro Valley.

I come before you today to respectfully ask that county government make road maintenance a high priority in its distribution of resources. I do not come with specific recommendations of how to do that, nor any expertise in the budgetary workings of county government. I know the county budget is complex, with big numbers, many competing interests, and insufficient revenues to ever take care of everything people want.

I strongly believe that good roads are fundamental and vital to a community's economic well-being. If people and goods are unable to move efficiently and safely, everyone suffers.

The Northwest side of Pima County is in relatively good shape. The towns of Marana and Oro Valley make it a priority to take care of their relatively new transportation infrastructures, and will continue to do so. The RTA sales tax has created a terrific roadway in La Canada, from north of Tangerine south to at least Ina, and the RTA-funded projects on Magee, Tangerine and La Cholla promise to make travel, and commerce, easier still in the future.

That said, I must express concerns about Ina, and Thornydale, and other very busy Northwest-side county roads that need repair and improvement.

It's easy to identify the need; it's much more difficult to find solutions.

I have read materials from Mr. Huckelberry, who has asked the business community to support a statewide fuel tax increase, and is now suggesting approval of a county sales tax increase for roads. It's difficult for a business organization such as our chamber to advocate for a tax increase. It's not a subject I've taken to our board of directors, because I sense very little support. Your taxpayers believe there is sufficient money to fix roads. And, I would note, as Oro Valley residents and property tax-payers, my wife and I expect a portion of our hard-earned dollars to go toward the county roads we drive on regularly.

According to Mr. Huckelberry's Aug. 1 memo on roads, we spend 38 percent of our total transportation revenues to service bond debt approved by the voters in 1997 to build roads. Is it possible to accelerate that bond debt repayment, and retirement, so more future money can go directly to work on the ground?

Again, I recognize the age of infrastructure, and the enormous demands placed upon the county's resources. Still, according to a PAG survey just this year, the condition and maintenance of the region's roadways is "far and away the biggest concern" of Pima County residents. I ask you to explore ways to address that concern. Thank you for your time and service.

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As an aside, I would encourage some agenda flexibility. I sat in chambers for more than 3 hours this morning with many hours while your board sat in closed session to discuss legal matters. Perhaps the supervisors could evaluate speaker cards when a meeting opens, and move agenda items to accommodate the public.

Respectfully submitted.

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