

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WORK SESSION HELD ON  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Ann English, Chairman, Telephonic; Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman; Peggy Judd, Supervisor

Staff Present: Richard G. Karwaczka, County Administrator  
Sharon Gilman, Deputy County Administrator  
Joe Casey, Associate County Administrator  
Christine Roberts, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney  
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Jackie Watkins, Engineering and Natural Resources Director  
Joaquin Solis, Environmental Project Coordinator  
Bradley Simmons, Civil Engineer II

Vice-Chairman Crosby called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION**

**Work Sessions are a time for County staff to inform and discuss agenda items with the Board of Supervisors and public comments will not be taken.**

***ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION***

**Board of Supervisors**

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding the Engineering & Natural Resources Department Informational Update, including the following topics: Engineering Division update.

Jackie Watkins, Engineering and Natural Resources Director, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Watkins stated the Moson Road project is currently in the design phase, administered by Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), with funding from a \$1 billion Sierra Vista Metropolitan Planning Organization (SVMPO) grant and a \$6.1 million ADOT discretionary grant. The design process is underway with Kimley-Horn as the consultant.

Ms. Watkins stated the Davis Road project involves multiple ongoing efforts to improve this major freight route. She noted mileposts 5, 9, and 13 have been the focus of drainage improvements, supported by a \$2.89 million grant and a \$3.6 million county match, with design updates currently in progress. She stated the Davis Road Highway 80 to Central project, funded by a Rebuilding America Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant, is in the design phase, with a 200-foot right-of-way planned to allow for future expansion, though current plans focus on

adding shoulders for safety.

Ms. Watkins stated the section from Central Highway to Highway 191 is in the right-of-way acquisition phase, with design plans being finalized for potential grant applications to fund construction, aiming to improve road safety with wider shoulders and reconfiguration.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins stated the grant of \$404,000 is being used right now and was received in 2020. She stated that if a property owner does not agree to the county's offer during the right-of-way acquisition process, the county has the option to pursue condemnation.

Ms. Watkins stated that the General Services Administration (GSA) is constructing the new Port of Entry expected to open in 2028, with a connecting road from Highway 80 being designed by ADOT. Ms. Watkins stated the county received a \$4.4 million Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant, supplemented by contributions from the county and the City of Douglas, to fund the design from 2025 to 2026, with the total project cost estimated at \$78 million. She noted the project, which includes a four-lane divided highway and possibly two roundabouts, will be a county road once completed as it is not in Douglas City limits.

Supervisor Judd stated some areas, like Sunizona and Willcox, are open to having more truck traffic routed through their regions, possibly to boost local economies. She noted that some communities, like St. David are concerned about the impact of such traffic, particularly the potential safety issues with heavy trucks passing by schools at high volumes.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins stated GSA is continuing discussions with Mexico regarding the new Port of Entry, with plans to visit Mexico City in September to ensure coordination on both sides for truck traffic. She stated the new port will be dedicated to commercial vehicles, particularly for agricultural goods requiring refrigerated inspections, while the existing port in Douglas will remain for pedestrian and residential vehicle traffic. GSA is building the Port of Entry however the utilities and roads must be constructed by local agencies.

Ms. Watkins stated the project on Stafford Lane involves realigning the existing multi-use path, which currently runs from Ramsey Canyon Road up to Cherokee Road, to avoid conflicts between vehicle traffic and the path. She stated the proposed plan will move the path to the east side of the 50-foot right-of-way. The road would be constructed using millings from the Highway 92 and 90 project. This will not be a County maintained road after completion.

Ms. Watkins stated the Foothills parking lot on Highway 92 needs resurfacing and redesign after one of its exit driveways was closed due to road widening by ADOT for turn lanes and sidewalks. She stated the current asphalt is deteriorating, so plans are in place to repave the lot and realign the parking spaces to create a one-way loop for easier access to the health department and service center.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins stated the parking spaces will be updated, with an emphasis on making them wide enough, likely around 10 feet, to accommodate trucks with limited turning radius.

Ms. Watkins stated that when adding or dropping roads from maintenance, the process involves careful consideration to balance the maintenance workload within

the same district. She stated that adding roads, factors like daily traffic, access to public lands, the presence of dedicated rights-of-way, and continuity with existing maintained roads are evaluated. She noted the road must have been constructed and in use by June 13, 1990, per state statute, and its drainage must be assessed. Ms. Watkins stated that when considering dropping a road, daily traffic, maintenance costs, encroachments, utility conflicts, and public right-of-way status are reviewed.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins stated some roads currently maintained by the county, although never built to a standard, could still be classified as primitive roads. She stated if these roads are bladed to allow two-way traffic, they might qualify for maintenance, though they would only be maintained once or twice a year. Ms. Watkins also stated there's a process in place for abandoning public rights-of-way that are no longer in use.

Ms. Watkins provided an overview of the various road and bridge projects underway in the County. Ms. Watkins stated in San Simon, an owner has proposed trading a piece of right-of-way on an adjacent vacant strip of land, allowing the road to be properly aligned without encroaching on private property. She stated the proposed trade involves about a third of an acre, and the matter is expected to be brought before the board next month for approval.

Ms. Watkins stated the County is updating several key programs, including the Traffic Management Program, and the Title VI plan for public participation in line with federal civil rights requirements. Ms. Watkins stated permit fees are also being reviewed, with proposals for fines on contractors who begin work without permits.

Ms. Watkins stated Davis Road, a major route connecting Highways 80 and 191, has seen significant oversize loads; she noted these wide loads require cars to pull completely off the road, often assisted by Department of Public Safety (DPS) officers, leading to challenges such as vehicles getting stuck in the mud. She stated there is a need for better vegetation management and road maintenance on Davis Road to accommodate the heavy and oversized traffic safely.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins stated that there are alternative solutions to improve Arzburger Road, such as widening and moving the ditch rather than guardrails, as guardrails are very expensive.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins stated the current use of Davis Road for oversize loads is primarily due to limitations on I-10 and the lack of a more efficient interchange at the I-10 and 191 junction. She noted if ADOT completes the planned diamond interchange at this location, it is expected to significantly reduce the oversized traffic load on Davis Road by about 90%.

Vice-Chairman Crosby adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

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Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

