

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**TOWN OF CAMP VERDE
REGULAR SESSION
APRIL 3, 2019**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM ERIC EBERHARD ITEM
5.5**

Save the Middle Verde Facebook Group

Presentation April 3, 2019 (section 1)

350-520 Active Members, 3,400 friends, 5,000 comments per 30 days (when they are archived). Compared to 200 comments the county has.

Debunking silly facts and providing new facts to consider. Note that relying on the county to provide “facts” forces us to argue on their terms. Example is #1 below – without the real facts we would be stuck with arguing that if you drive from Phoenix to Flag there are virtually zero places with alternative routes around I-17.

- 1) There is no alternate route around I-17 which we need in case I-17 is closed. FALSE. Less than a mile from I-17 on Middle Verde Road is an alternate – Arena Del Loma – which splits off of MV Road and goes to the high school where one can go to 260 or to General Crook Trail. By Clear Creek, west side of Camp Verde, is a well maintained graded road that goes all the way to 179 and has a turnoff to Lake Montezuma. In addition, one can get off I-17 at General Crook and go through Main Street all the way up to Middle Verde Road. There is no lack of alternatives.
- 2) Middle Verde has poor access to Cottonwood compared to the rest of the town. FALSE. Here are measurements with time and distance, some by computer, some by driving, that point that out. Note that these examples are “extremes” meaning that past the end of MV Road and around the corner and even onto the county land is where I measured from. These are all to the intersection of I-17 and 260.
 - a. Outlook Acres: 13 minutes and 7.2 miles
 - b. Salt Mine (River Bend) 20 minutes and 9.8 miles
 - c. Verde Lakes: 13 minutes and 8.6 miles
 - d. Sierra Verde: 12.6 minutes and 7.6 miles
 - e. Jordan Meadows: 9.7 minutes and 4.8 miles
 - f. Town Hall (for giggles and not counted in my averages): 5 minutes and 3.2 miles (only 7 minutes faster than Middle Verde extreme)

Note that Middle Verde Road at the extremes has a better average in travel time compared to other major areas.

- 3) Middle Verde road is disadvantaged getting to Cottonwood. FALSE. I made a “donut” (more like a horse shoe) including all of Camp Verde and averaged out the distances and projected times (by computer). Middle Verde Road as a whole is similar or better than 60-70% of the Town of Camp Verde. I leave you to do your own maps and math but I am correct within +/- 5%

- 4) Middle Verde Road is somehow unique in that there are no alternate routes in case of a major fire sweeping down the Verde requiring evacuation. FALSE.
- First, I checked the records back to General Crook (about 150 years) and no such event has ever happened.
 - Salt Mine, once past the shooting range has no other access.
 - Verde Lakes has several ways to leave the neighborhood – mostly impassable during floods of even minor size.
 - Sierra Verde has one way out that I could find (might be another but it was not obvious)
 - Jordan Meadows is much like Middle Verde in that within a mile of the main road (260 in their case) there are two ways to go on Quarter Horse. Otherwise they are locked in as well.
- 5) Emergency services are uniquely difficult on the Middle Verde due to distance and time to 260. FALSE.
- See the above.
 - In addition, top level critical care requires a helicopter to Flag or Phoenix. It would be faster and safer to go to the VVMC Camp Verde Campus and get the chopper there, instead of going to Cottonwood first.
 - VVMC (see their Web site) believes they can get anyone in the Verde Valley to the Cottonwood hospital in 24 minutes using their chopper.
- 6) This somehow makes financial sense to help us “poor disadvantaged people” on the Middle Verde. FALSE. If you pick a “split point” where you believe people on Middle Verde Road would still go I-17 to 260 to Cottonwood – due to higher speed roads (and most GPS systems would chose this) you get interesting numbers. As a split point I used the place near the Yavapai-Apache cemetery where the speed limit goes from 45 to 35. That is only 2.5 miles, or 3.3 minutes. Obviously if you live at Distant Drums you would use I-17 and obviously if you lived right next to the Verde Connect you would use the new bridge.
- The number of households on MV Rd past the split point is approximately 150 based on me counting parcels. This compares to 4,557 households in all of Camp Verde based on the latest census. So this portion of the town that would supposedly benefit from a new road (but don’t want it because they like their peace and quiet) is 3.3% of the total household population. Camp Verde average household density is 106 households per square mile according to the census, which matches well with my counts.
 - The bridge and road are estimated to cost \$35 million dollars (I don’t believe that number for a second, but let’s use it). So for 150 households we are spending \$233,333.33 each. I don’t believe I need a scientific poll to know that every household on the Verde past the split point would rather you just write them a check for \$233,333.33 and go away. To also put this in perspective, if every

household in Camp Verde got \$233,333.33 the total cost would be 1.06 TRILLION dollars.

- c. At this split point the time to 260 is 5.2 minutes – the same as from Town Hall more or less.

So building this road for the benefit of us “poor disadvantaged people” on Middle Verde Road is extremely excessive and not needed.

- 7) The people on the Middle Verde need more fire and emergency services as we are disadvantaged. FALSE.
 - a. Again, see above
 - b. A fire/emergency substation --- the last I could find that was built near here – was \$350,000 which seems low to me. Probably did not include equipment and personnel. For the sake of argument, say a substation with a helipad costs \$5 million. A small emergency helicopter is \$250,000 and a huge one is \$1.7 million. So if we allocate say \$8 million for substations (fully equipped and staffed), firetrucks, ambulances, personnel, and a helicopter for each we could add more than four plus such substations, and serve the whole town better with emergency services. My estimates are exaggerated – probably much higher than reality.
 - c. What perhaps the county and the council are unaware of, the Nation and the Fire Department are building a nice new fully equipped and staffed substation on Middle Verde road on reservation land west of Distant Drums. This means the average response driving time for Middle Verde residents will be on the order of 3-4 minutes and to the extremes of Overlook Acres 5-6 minutes. Middle Verde Road will have the best access to emergency services than almost the entire Town of Camp Verde. Perhaps some help from the town and a grant and we can have a chopper there as well.

Save the Middle Verde Facebook Group

Presentation April 3, 2019 (section 2)

350-520 Active Members, 3,400 friends, 5,000 comments per 30 days (when they are archived). Compared to 200 comments the county has.

I was on council in 1999 when the initial plan by ADOT was approved for the Verde Valley. Based on solid data from existing roads they built the bypass around Finnie Flats and Main Street and planned to do the 260 west portion by 2005. In 2005 they explained that their estimates for future needs were way off and they would not be doing this expansion any time soon. It took 13 more years until they finally did it. In the county's current plans, they did their studies while 260 was a 35 mph construction zone subject to flagging and generally poor conditions. And then made estimates based on comments, traffic studies, surveys, etc. – which are certainly poorer than ADOT's where with valid numbers. At a minimum, council should require the county to do all surveys and traffic studies after the road is complete this spring.

The council in 1999 agreed to allow the bypass of our core down town. The result is boarded up buildings, minimal occupancy, a half empty mall, and rental prices half of what they were in 1992. A bypass NEVER helps a town, it always kills it. We have one remaining commercial area – as defined in the General Plan as a character area – the 260 corridor west of I-17. If it is successful then it will spill east and up Finnie Flats and eventually into Main Street. It may take decades, but this is a decade's long plan.

The Yavapai-Apache Nation has a similar problem as the north side of 260 is their land. The south side is within the town. With Verde Connect the destination is always Cottonwood. From VOC, from East Sedona, from Middle Verde ... another bypass. It is like we did not learn from our mistake in 1999. This is a perfect opportunity for the Nation and the Town to get together and partner to make the 260 corridor a destination shopping area. The Nation, in fact, has plans for a large mall there and I don't believe they have any interest in bypassing it. And we should not either. Instead, we should oppose any bypass and team up to get anchor stores such as Costco or Sam's or a mall built by the Nation – which will lead to many many small businesses such as bike store, family restaurants, entertainment, enhancing Out of Africa, hotels, as well as large chains from Red Lobster to Trader Joe's.

I should point out that business likes stability more than anything else. They need to know the expected travel and the number of people that will shop at their business before making their decision to move either to Camp Verde or Cottonwood. We should learn from the Yavapai-Apache Nation. They make long term plans. They stick to them, maybe an inch a year, maybe a mile a year, but they stick to it until they succeed. Look at their growth over the last 2 ½ decades. Compare that to Camp Verde. We make plans. Then we see a shiny bauble someplace – a grant, a business in the wrong place, whatever. So we change things. And months later we see a new shiny bauble and do it all over again. As a result, Camp Verde is not marching towards a long-term goal, we are flopping around like spastics on a stick. We have a state-wide (and among big box stores, a nation-wide) reputation for being flakes. Nobody wants

to put their business here because next month another shiny bauble will come along and we abandon all our planning to chase the new bauble. There is a big difference between being a flake and being flexible. We need some flexibility, but we look like a flaky rudderless ship.

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Presentation April 3, 2019 (section 3)

350-520 Active Members, 3,400 friends, 5,000 comments per 30 days (when they are archived). Compared to 200 comments the county has.

I suspect you may have noticed at the last county presentation that – after some math – the county said they have 8-10 million annually for projects like this. County wide. Including Black Canyon City. Prescott. Seligman. Chino Valley. Prescott Valley. Ash Fork. Cornville. Camp Verde. Clarkdale. Cottonwood. Village of Oak Creek (VOC). Skull Valley. Bagdad. East Sedona. Unincorporated areas. And more. Just their proposal for a five mile road at “typical” costs would be 10 million (1 million per lane-mile). Anyone that believes that this will be close to typical is insane. Drive the pipeline road. It is true that on a map, you can draw a straight line from Cornville Road to Middle Verde road and get five miles. But you can’t build a road over the White Cliffs through all those washes and following contours and make switchbacks and avoiding petroglyphs, dwellings, human remains, and pottery shards ... and come up with five miles. And it most certainly will not cost “typical” dollars. You can’t get from Middle Verde Road to 260 with a typical road. The flood plain on Middle Verde is 1-2 kilometers. They can build a road in the flood plain, but not the flood way. So in theory the bridge could be 1/3 of a mile. And the connections would be wiped out every time it floods. It truly will end up being a bridge to nowhere. The Nation is very concerned about the environmental, historical, and archeological issues. They have an army of lawyers to make sure it is done correctly. These permits will be expensive. They will have little chance of connecting Cornville Road to the Middle Verde. There is a high probability that we get a bridge and road from Middle Verde to 260 – and nothing more. Or more likely, they will enact a “temporary” tax to complete the road, much like West Sedona in Coconino county has done – a 0.5% “Motion Tax.” Like the old Beatles song “The Taxman” – “if you walk I’ll tax your feet.” I have yet to live long enough to see a temporary tax.

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Presentation April 3, 2019 (section 4)

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Questions the Town of Camp Verde must ask are – what will this cost us? And what do we benefit from it?

Roads of different types have different standards. A freeway that always 75 mph traffic is a much different road than a connector road at 45 mph which is much different from a winding dead-end country road. The West Middle Verde Road floods in even modest rainstorms in over a dozen places. I have seen more than 10 accidents over the years, either from going too fast and hydroplaning off the road due to mud and water, or due to blind driveways that cause either property owners, travelers, or both to be in an accident. One such accident was at my driveway where a truck going down Middle Verde swerved to avoid me coming out of my driveway. It rolled. The officer on the scene said that whomever built the driveway should be liable. I told him “that would be the Town of Camp Verde” as this driveway was created when the bridge over Grandpa’s Wash was built. This bridge has seen floods – once the water was four feet over the bridge and the Marshal’s office had to put up cones and block access. Every time Grandpa’s Wash runs high the Verde ditch is trashed.

West Middle Verde Road is not of the standards required for a connector road. Not even close. The town would be liable for the blind driveways, the flooding -- and the accidents that occur due to these. The maintenance costs to keep the road viable will increase exponentially as traffic increases along Middle Verde Road. Middle Verde Road will be the Town of Camp Verde’s responsibility to keep safe from all these dangers – responsible to bring a substandard road up to the standards of a connector road. And the town will be required to spend more and more dollars to fix these problems and maintain the road.

The reason Middle Verde Road works is because when the water – running 4-10 deep in its washes – exist these washes, it spreads out like a fan. By the time it hits the road it is only 2-4 inches deep plus some mud. This continues across the private property and continues to fan out, cause little damage. The OK and Verde Ditches survive because they are not pummeled with a large fast jet of water, but instead get water spread out in a wide pattern. To bring Middle Verde Road up to the standards of a connector road, this flooding must be mitigated. To do this the town will have to put in culverts. They cannot just dump this water at high concentrated volume onto private land, and then let it create gullies and hit the two ditches in a solid stream. The private property and the ditches will be destroyed. So you end up going down a very expensive rabbit hole – one where you need to put culverts the entire length of private property; one where you need to put culverts under the two ditches; and one where you have to somehow figure out how to cross the island in the middle of the river that stretches from Tickaboo Ranch in the east to past the Cloverleaf Ranch to the west, and eventually dump this excess water into the Verde River. This could increase the flow in the Verde River considerably as it will no longer slowly soak into the properties along Middle Verde Road. You could easily find yourself damaging the I-17

bridge and Black Bridge and White Bridge and a host of other problem. It is a liability monster the town will be adopting.

And what do we get from this road? Nothing but harm. We damage the Middle Verde Character Area, we damage the 260 Business Corridor, we lose business and sales tax, we add to our reputation of being unreliable for business and residents to consider moving to. There is no need for this road, as amply demonstrated earlier – only harm and expense – expense we will have to shoulder with smaller and smaller revenue as business and residents flee to other areas.