



Florence Reminder Blade Tribune > Top Stories

## Town seeks funds for stoplight that state has no plans to install

Print Page

### Staff Reports

Published: Thursday, September 9, 2010 6:12 AM MST

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has already found that a stoplight is warranted at Arizona 79 and Diversion Dam Road in Florence, but has not committed any funds to install it, Town Manager Himanshu Patel told the Town Council.

At a work session last week, Patel told the council that town staff has applied for several grants that the town could use to pay for the light.

"If we don't at least plan for something, we're going to be overrun," Vice Mayor Tom Smith said. He recently suggested a lower speed limit might make the highway safer through town.

Public Works Director Wayne Costa told the council that only the state can change the speed limit on a state highway, and suggested the council pass a resolution asking ADOT to study the speed limit. Issues on Arizona 79 such as the downgrade from Florence Gardens, the narrowness of the bridge and traffic from Diversion Dam Road and Florence Heights Drive should be brought to the attention of ADOT's investigator, Costa said.

Patel said ADOT further claims that most of the traffic isn't "passthrough," but locally-generated traffic, as a reason not to commit state funding. In the meantime, the town can save up for the light as new construction projects pay their fair share of transportation impact fees. The town will also attempt to reach "participation agreements" with major users of the road, such as Corrections Corporation of America.

### Impact fees

Council members also expressed an interest in ending the town's "impact fee waiver zones," while still allowing impact fees to be either reduced or waived in certain cases.

The town instituted impact fees in 2003, but waived them in the downtown area and North Florence to incentivize building in those areas.

"I think we accomplished what we set out to do," Smith said, noting 30 or more homes were built in the town core, "and maybe it's time to step back."

Patel said impact fees are intended to make new development and construction pay for their impacts on town services, and "when you eliminate fees, it has to be compensated somewhere else.

"... The way we have it now is not a fair and equitable approach," and has the potential to burden the town's General Fund, Highway User Revenue (HURF) Funds and utility funds, Patel said.

Council member Vallarie Woolridge agreed, "At this point it's outdated, and we need to let everyone pay their own way."

Patel said the town could eliminate its free zones, but still allow fees to be credited back if it can be shown there was a building there in the past. The town could also provide an "Infill Incentive District" in which fees are reduced if certain conditions to benefit the town are met. Cities and towns that use an Infill Incentive District include Avondale, Buckeye, Flagstaff, Peoria, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Sierra Vista and Tucson, according to a memo from town staff to the council.

### Speaking to the council

Mayor Vicki Kilvinger suggested eliminating the council's second "call to the public" toward the end of its regular meetings. This would leave just one "call to the public" opportunity for speaking to the council near the beginning of regular meetings.

A few minutes prior to each regular meeting, the town clerk will remind the public to submit their requests if they wish to speak.

Long-winded speakers will generally no longer be tolerated if they haven't been expressly invited to address the council. The town is currently obtaining quotes on a timer limiting speakers to three minutes. The timer will display green, then yellow when the speaker has a minute left, and then red when his time is up.

Copyright © 2010 - Tri Valley Central

[\[x\] Close Window](#)