

# Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway

## 32nd Street Traffic Interchange Public Involvement Summary

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In cooperation with:

Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)

Federal Highway Administration

Connect 202 Partners

### 1. Introduction

In 2005, the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team made a recommendation to remove a traffic interchange (TI) at 32nd Street and the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway from the project scope during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. Based on the input received from the Citizens Advisory Team and the City of Phoenix, ADOT agreed to no longer study an interchange at 32nd Street. In 2006, the City of Phoenix conducted a traffic circulation study to evaluate the impacts of the proposed freeway on the local street system, including the elimination of the 32nd Street TI. The City study found no adverse effects on the local street system from the freeway, with or without an interchange at 32nd Street.

After the Record of Decision (ROD) but prior to construction starting on the project, ADOT and the freeway developer, Connect 202 Partners (C202P), participated in a public meeting for the freeway at Desert Vista Highschool in the Ahwatukee Foothills Village. During that fall 2016 meeting, the community, including local and state officials, expressed interest in reconsidering the need for a TI at 32nd Street. The community was concerned that traffic would substantially increase on Liberty Lane and Lakewood Parkway (both minor neighborhood collectors) if vehicles currently using 32nd Street instead cut through neighborhoods to get to 24th or 40th streets to access the new freeway. They anticipated that this additional traffic would pass directly by several local schools and expressed concern it would compromise the safety of students and residents.

The project team continued to receive numerous requests from the local community and schools to revisit the possibility of constructing a TI at 32nd Street. The study has also been supported by elected officials and the Maricopa Association of Governments.

In response to the community's requests, ADOT directed C202P to draft preliminary design plans to determine the feasibility of adding an interchange without acquiring additional properties. Figure 1 shows a proposed conceptual design for a 32nd Street TI. ADOT also began an environmental reevaluation to determine the feasibility and analyze the environmental and social impacts of adding an interchange at 32nd Street.

**Figure 1: Proposed 32nd Street Traffic Interchange Concept**

The purpose of the 32nd Street TI would be to improve access to and mobility within Ahwatukee Foothills Village. Benefits of this TI would include:

- maintaining current trip distributions by providing access to the freeway from the north-to-south arterial streets that currently connect to Pecos Road;
- reducing traffic volumes on the adjacent interchanges at 40th and 24th streets; and
- providing emergency access for the local schools in the 32nd Street area.

As part of the environmental review process, a neighborhood open house was held at Desert Vista Highschool to obtain public input and comply with environmental regulations. This document summarizes the public involvement process that occurred to solicit public comments during the comment period from May 2 to June 4, 2018, and the input received during that process.

### 1.1 Public Involvement Purpose and Process

Consistent with ADOT's Public Involvement Plan and the public involvement guiding principles established by the Federal Highway Administration, the 32nd Street TI study team planned three stages of public involvement, including an "open house" style public meeting to encourage adjacent community and agency stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed interchange during the public comment period. The goal of this involvement plan was to solicit input from the community to express their support or opposition to the proposed interchange and to enable the project team to understand community issues and concerns.

The first stage in the public involvement process was to engage with agency and elected officials to give them an overview of the project and provide an opportunity for them to comment. The second stage included an online questionnaire and Question and Answer (Q&A) resource posted to the project website. Once agency officials had been engaged and the questionnaire and Q&A were published online, the third stage was to hold an open house to encourage public participation in the environmental study process. A summary of each stage of the public involvement process is provided in the sections below.

## 2. Agency and Elected Official Outreach

The purpose of the agency and elected official outreach was to provide an overview of the project to those representing the communities potentially impacted by the project. The study purpose, schedule, and communication/outreach plan were presented. In addition to providing background and other pertinent information, the outreach was also designed to encourage these officials to identify issues, concerns, and opportunities they felt needed to be addressed during the study. They also were asked to share study information provided by the study team, including the questionnaire and open house invitation, with their constituents.

The study team prepared and distributed notification via email to agency and elected official representatives identified as having a potential interest in the study. The emails were sent March 19, April 26, and May 2, 2018, to ten elected officials (Table 1). Appendix A includes copies of the email notifications that were distributed.

**Table 1: Agency and Elected Official Outreach**

<b>Date Briefed (Email/In-Person)</b>	<b>Elected Official/Agency</b>
<b>February 28: In-Person March 19; April 26; May 2: Email</b>	Representative Jill Norgaard, District 18
<b>March 19; April 26; May 2: Email</b>	Maricopa County Supervisor, Denny Barney, District 1
<b>March 19; April 26; May 2: Email</b>	City of Phoenix Councilman, Sal DiCiccio, District 6 Councilwoman Kate Gallego, District 8
<b>March 19; April 26; May 2: Email</b>	Senator Sean Bowie, District 18 Representative Mitzi Epstein, District 18 Senator Catherine Miranda, District 27 Representative Rebecca Rios, District 27 Representative Reginald Bolding, District 27 Congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema, 9th District

### 3. Public Outreach

#### 3.1 Public Notification of Study Comment Period

The public was notified of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street TI study and open house in the following ways:

- On May 2, 2018, an advertisement was published in the *Ahwatukee Foothills News*.
- ADOT distributed two news releases (May 2, 2018, and May 16, 2018):
  - [https://www.azdot.gov/projects/central-district-projects/loop-202-\(south-mountain-freeway\)/stay-in-the-loop/media/2018/05/02/adot-considering-two-additional-interchanges-for-south-mountain-freeway](https://www.azdot.gov/projects/central-district-projects/loop-202-(south-mountain-freeway)/stay-in-the-loop/media/2018/05/02/adot-considering-two-additional-interchanges-for-south-mountain-freeway)
  - [https://www.azdot.gov/projects/central-district-projects/loop-202-\(south-mountain-freeway\)/stay-in-the-loop/media/2018/05/16/south-mountain-freeway-open-house-may-22-on-potential-32nd-street-interchange](https://www.azdot.gov/projects/central-district-projects/loop-202-(south-mountain-freeway)/stay-in-the-loop/media/2018/05/16/south-mountain-freeway-open-house-may-22-on-potential-32nd-street-interchange)
- On May 2 and May 22, 2018, ADOT shared announcements and advertised the study on the South Mountain Freeway and ADOT Facebook pages:
  - <https://www.facebook.com/SouthMountainFreeway/photos/a.1962359563986886.1073741828.1936236886.599154/2163012753921565/?type=3&theater>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/SouthMountainFreeway/photos/a.1962359563986886/2174328392790001/?type=3&theater>
  - [https://www.facebook.com/AZDOT/posts/1946113032127057?\\_xts\\_\\_\[0\]=68.ARC8GBw4T1Ls\\_p4YAYivvqOibJh-KY-sNAZlZTQL5jgNGVoNdtty0y9WWJjUdkrFxaNVsu1Llp2oV1RD-ScdoyEP5Ss8WDJEQMxg\\_GmHVfcykM6mX33Z0APoHVp0h4fJiWzRgB0-TMTV&\\_tn\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/AZDOT/posts/1946113032127057?_xts__[0]=68.ARC8GBw4T1Ls_p4YAYivvqOibJh-KY-sNAZlZTQL5jgNGVoNdtty0y9WWJjUdkrFxaNVsu1Llp2oV1RD-ScdoyEP5Ss8WDJEQMxg_GmHVfcykM6mX33Z0APoHVp0h4fJiWzRgB0-TMTV&_tn_=-R)

#### 3.2 32nd Street Questionnaire

ADOT invited the public to complete a questionnaire during the public comment period (May 2 to June 4, 2018) regarding the environmental study of the proposed TI. The online questionnaire was provided in English and Spanish and included the Title VI disclosure, study background, and history. The questionnaire could be completed online or on paper at the public open house. The questionnaire asked participants to provide information on how they access areas near 32nd Street and the existing Pecos Road alignment, and how the community and surrounding area might be impacted with or without the interchange. A summary of the questionnaire results is provided in the *Public Comment Summary* on page 9 and included in Appendix B.

#### 3.3 Question and Answer Resource

The study team initially developed a series of 11 questions and answers to help proactively address questions they anticipated the community would have about the study. The Q&A resource was published on the study website at the beginning of the public comment period on May 2, 2018. Halfway through the public comment period, responses to the questionnaire were analyzed and categorized to extract common themes and derive frequently asked questions that were included in the updated Q&A resource on May 17, 2018.

Appendix B is a copy of the Q&A resource that was published online and provided at the public open.

#### 3.4 Open House

An open house was held on May 22, 2018, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Desert Vista High School, 16440 S. 32nd Street, Phoenix. The open house format was chosen to allow attendees to view renderings, provide feedback on the 32nd Street TI, and get Pecos Segment construction information updates. There was no formal presentation and attendees could speak one-on-one with project staff about the 32nd Street TI environmental study and the Pecos Segment construction update. The open house began with registration at the door, where attendees were asked to sign in. Sign-in sheets were created to provide a record of attendance and allow people wanting to receive project updates to provide their email address. After signing in, attendees were encouraged to walk around the various

stations, view the displays, and ask questions of project staff. They were also given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire and comment form. Approximately 135 people attended the open house.

#### **3.4.1 Open House Materials**

A variety of materials were available to the public at the open house; copies can be found in Appendix B.

#### **3.4.2 Open House Stations**

The open house was set up and organized into three specific areas: (1) welcome/sign-in; (2) 32nd Street TI; and (3) Pecos Segment Construction Update. Stations included:

##### **Welcome/Sign-In**

- Sign-in sheets
- Title VI notice and voluntary Self-Identification survey cards
- 32nd Street questionnaire and comment form
- Connect 202 Partners business cards

##### **32nd Street TI**

- Display boards
  - Environmental reevaluation study timeline
  - Environmental issues under study
  - Proposed 32nd Street TI rendering
- Roll plots of preliminary design plans showing 32nd Street with and without a TI
- Printed 32nd Street questionnaire and iPads to provide access to the online questionnaire
- 32nd Street Q&A

##### **Pecos Segment Construction Update**

- Bridge and sound wall aesthetics display boards
- Pecos Segment roll plot showing sound walls and interchanges
- Desert Foothills Parkway temporary connection to Pecos Road during bridge construction
- Double-diamond interchange information
- Fly-over video simulation
- 2019 Pecos Segment phasing and general construction forecast schedule
- Construction Notice #3

## **4. Public Feedback**

### **4.1 32nd Street Questionnaire Results**

A public questionnaire was available online during the public comment period from May 2 to June 4, 2018. Hard copy questionnaires were provided to attendees at the May 22, 2018, public open house. 1,670 online questionnaires were received. A summary of the questionnaire results is shown in Figure 2, and all responses are included in Appendix C. A summary of the comments received through the questionnaire can be found in the *Public Comment Summary*, page 9.

Figure 2: Questionnaire Responses, Questions 1-6

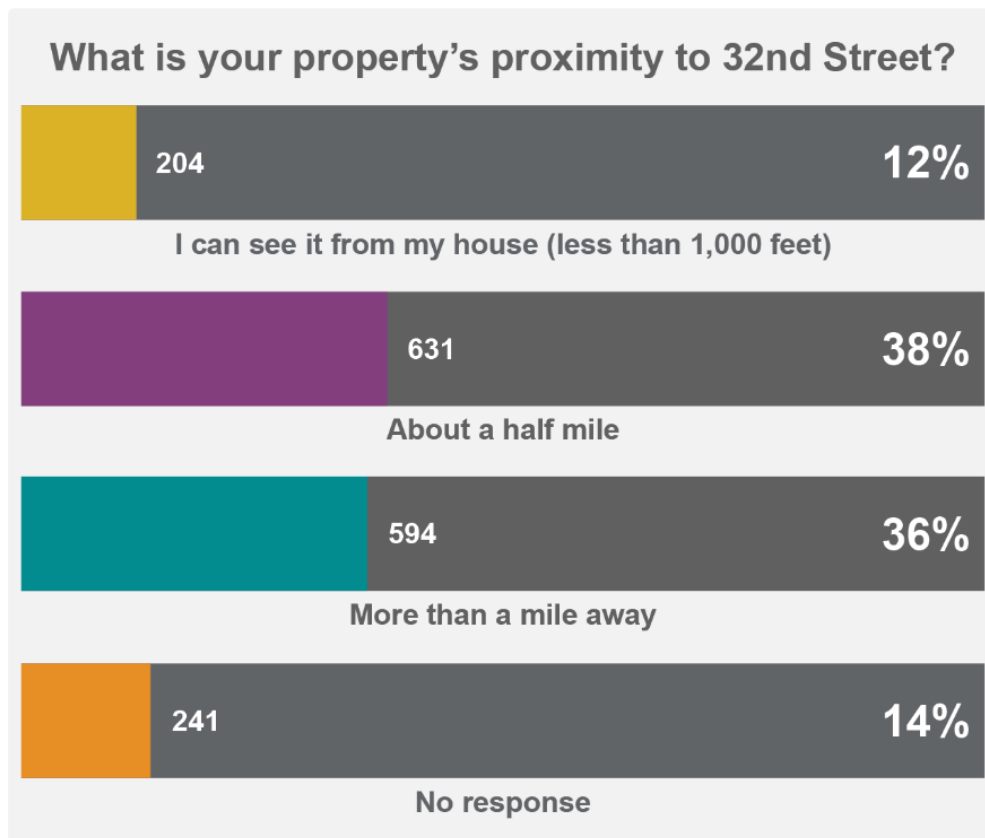
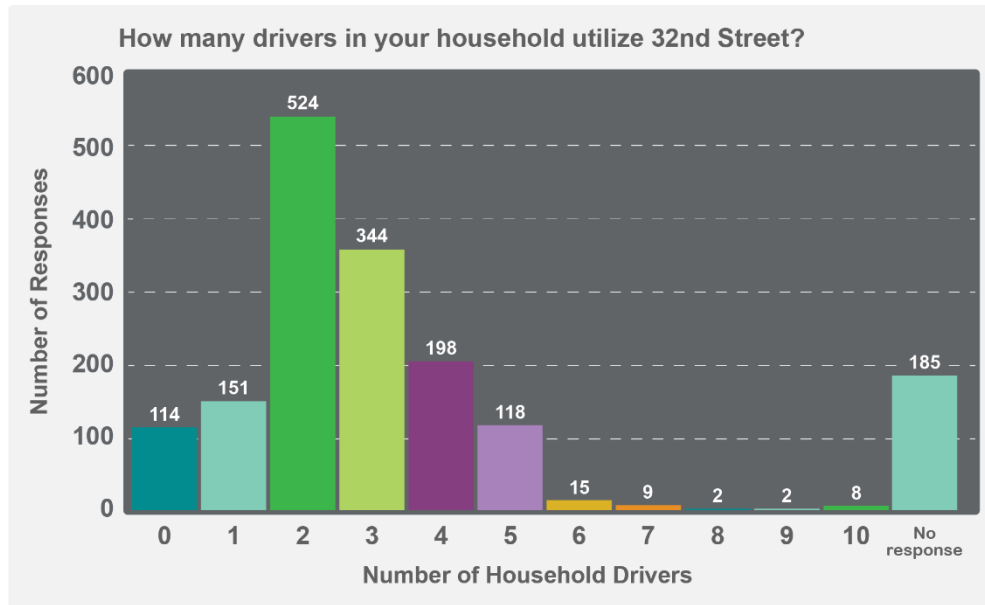
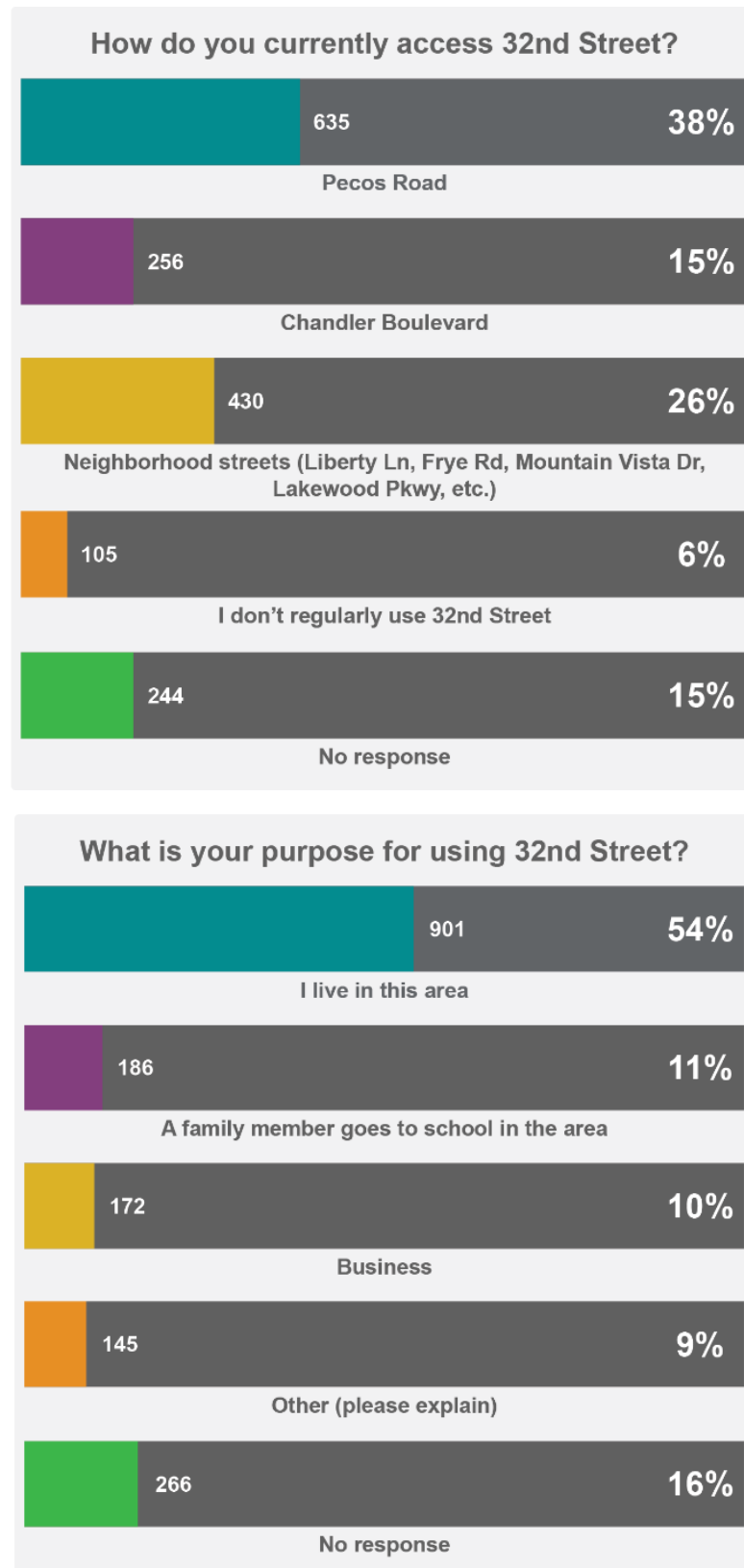
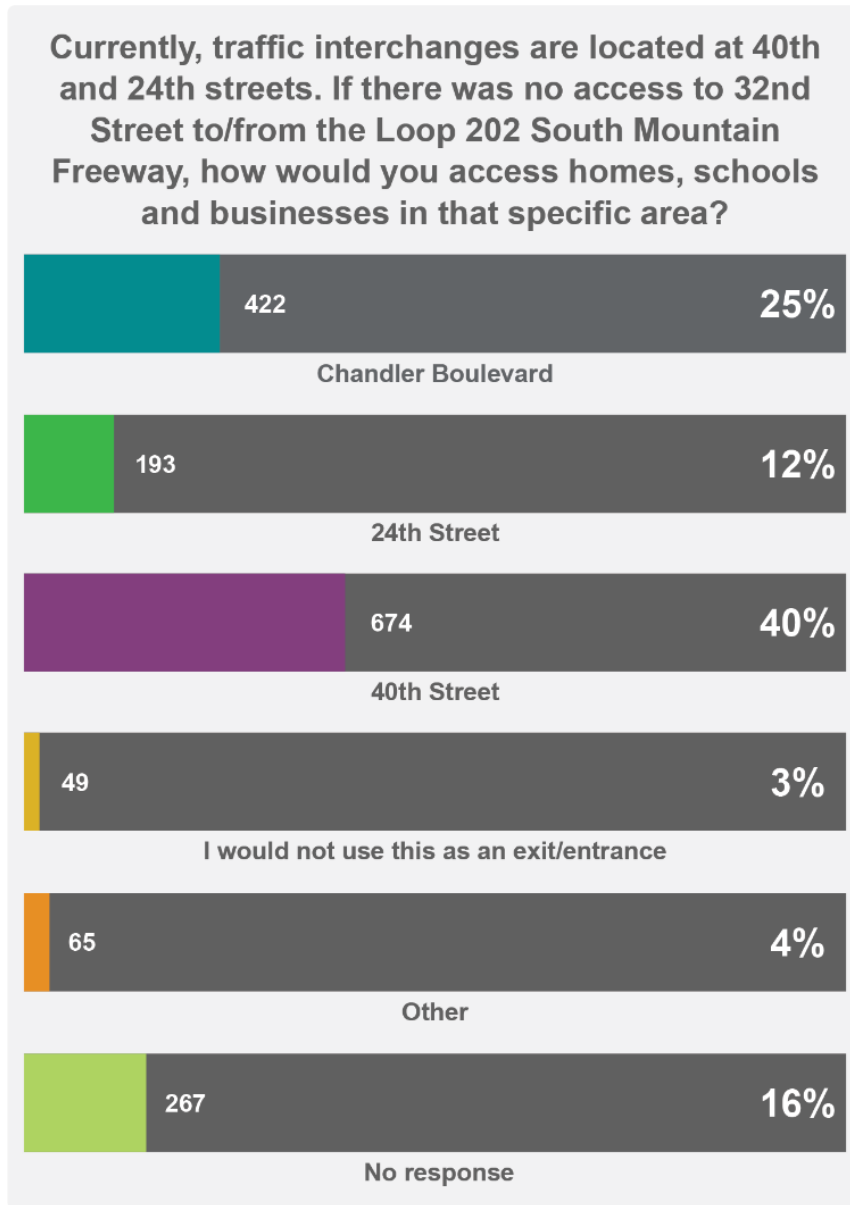


Figure 2: Questionnaire Responses, Questions 1-6 (*continued*)

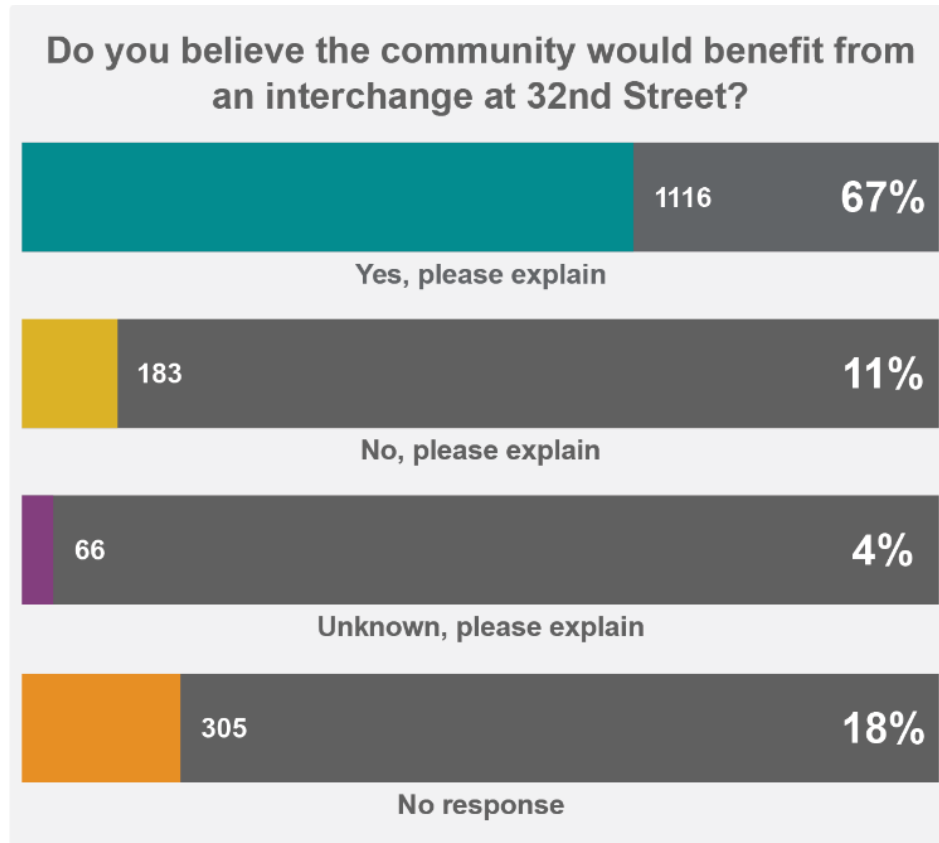
Other reasons for using 32nd Street included access to businesses, schools, and recreation. Respondents also indicated using 32nd Street to access Pecos Road.

**Figure 2: Questionnaire Responses, Questions 1-6 (continued)**



Respondents who chose "Other" most frequently stated they would use "shortcuts through the neighborhood," including Liberty Lane, Lakewood Parkway, and other neighborhood streets.





## 4.2 Public Comment Summary

This section presents a summary of the comments received during the comment period. Common themes in the comments were identified and are listed below:

- Freeway access road
- Business access
- Impacts on neighborhood collector roads
- Cost
- Emergency access
- Freeway access
- General opposition
- General support
- Miscellaneous
- Noise
- Residential access
- Right of way impacts
- Safety
- School access
- Shared use path
- Traffic control changes
- Traffic volumes

A total of 1,748 comments were received during the comment period. All comments received were coded for specific issues or recommendations raised by the commenter. During the comment period, comments could be submitted in a variety of ways: US mail, project telephone line, email, Open House comment form, and through the online

questionnaire (available in both hardcopy and online versions). A summary of the comments received is shown below and all comments received are included in Appendix C.

**Table 2: Comment Summary**

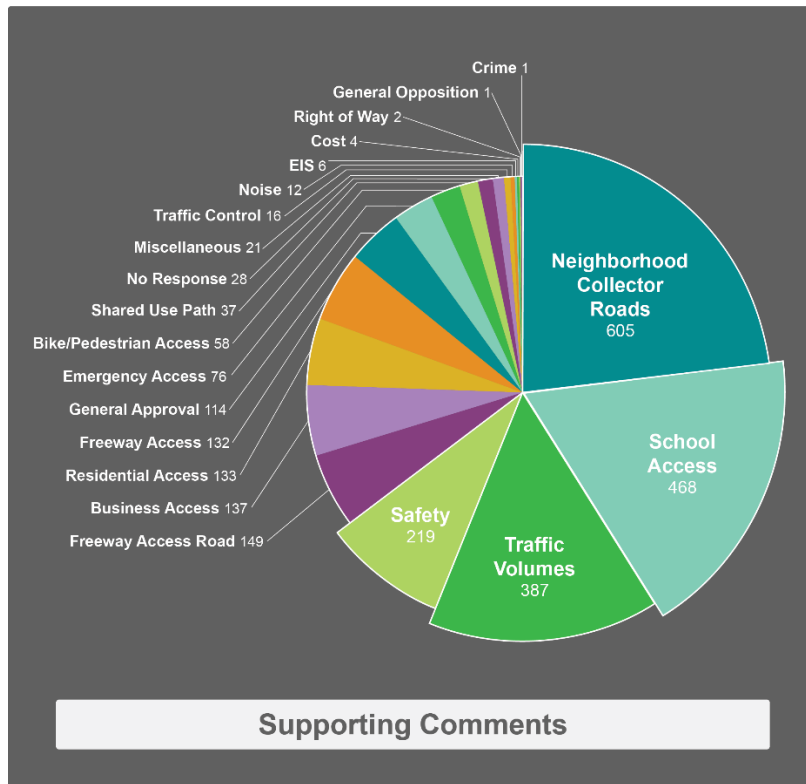
Comment Received	Quantity	Support	Oppose	Unknown	No Response
Email	43	32	5	6	N/A
US mail	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Telephone line	13	9	1	3	N/A
Open House comment form	22	16	5	1	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Online questionnaire	1,670	1,116	183	66	305
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,748</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>305</b>

All comments were assigned either support, opposition, or neutral stance on the TI. The comments were quantified as:

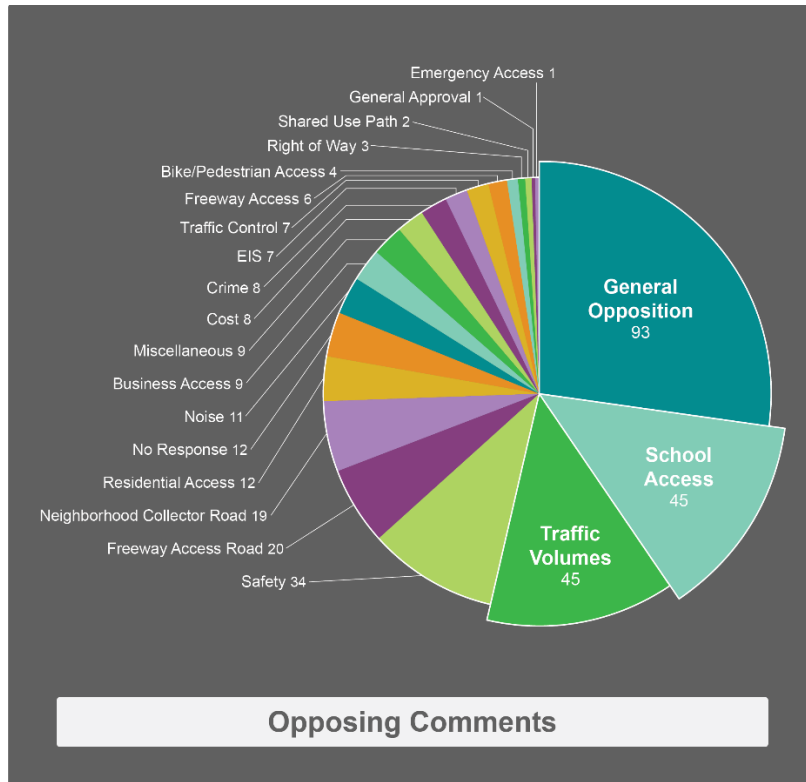
- Support the 32nd Street TI: 1,039
- Oppose the 32nd Street TI: 194
- Preference unknown: 76
- No response: 305

Comments were also evaluated to identify the reason(s) for support or opposition and sorted as appropriate into the classification categories described earlier. The results of that evaluation are depicted in Figures 3, 4 and 5.

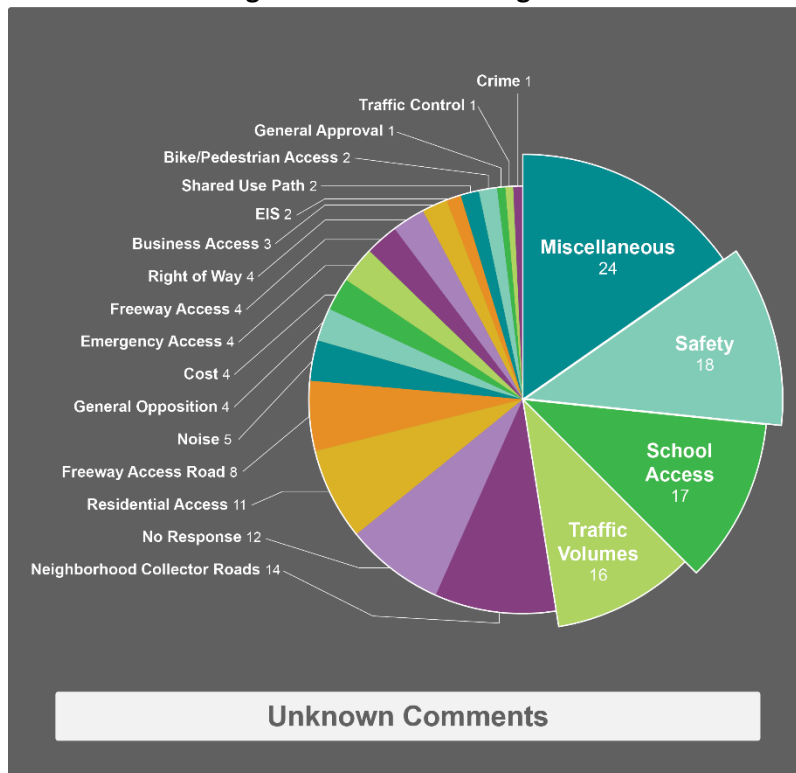
**Figure 3: Support Categories**



**Figure 4: Opposition Categories**



**Figure 5: Unknown Categories**

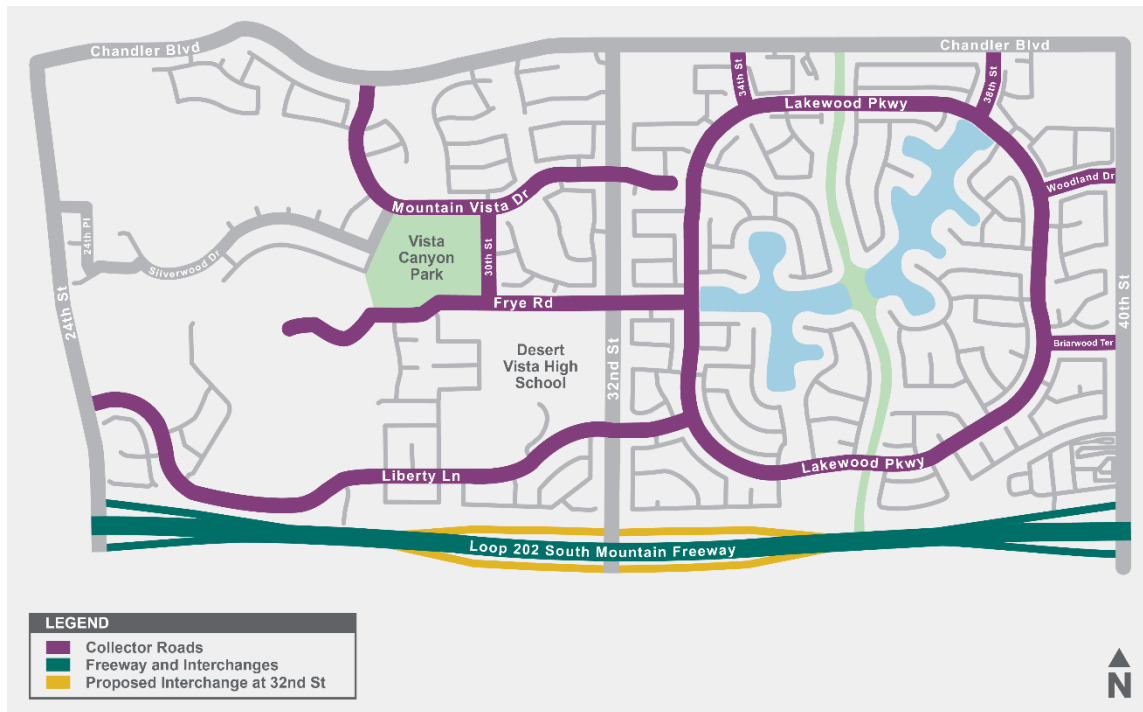


Totals in Figure 3, 4, and 5 do not equal 100 because multiple topics may have been included in individual comments.

#### 4.2.1 Summary of Comments Supporting Traffic Interchange

Traffic volumes, impacts on neighborhood collector roads, school access, and safety were the most commonly referenced reasons for needing the interchange. In general, support comments reflected concern that without a TI at 32nd Street, there would be an increase in traffic volumes on neighborhood collector roads (see Figure 6) through adjacent neighborhoods from 24th and 40th streets, creating safety concerns for roadway users, including bicyclists and pedestrians who access schools in the area.

**Figure 6: 32nd Street Neighborhood Collector Roads Map**



Following is a sample of the comments received related to the top four support categories.

##### **Traffic Volumes**

- I do not know why there is any question about having an interchange at 32nd street. 40th Street is not set up to handle all the traffic that will be driven to it. All the residence who live between 40th Street and 24th Street will all have to use 40th Street. That will cause a huge bottleneck and the traffic noise will be unbearable for the homeowners who back up to 40th Street.
- 32nd Street interchange will reduce the traffic that is expected to build up on 40th Street, Chandler Blvd. and through the surrounding communities including Lakewood. Thank you for your consideration.
- I would like to see the 32nd Street traffic interchange going forward. This would help with the traffic and those who live near. I am off of 17th where you currently have to turn right. I have seen this whole process and am concerned about traffic. Please do whatever it takes to make this happen.
- The proposed TI for 32nd Street is very necessary for traffic flow to be maintained at a reasonable level.
- It is imperative that there is an interchange put at 32nd Street in order to control the traffic in Lakewood. The mornings are already crazy enough around the lake, adding the traffic that would flow off of 40th would be awful.

##### **Neighborhood Collector Roads**

- I am a resident of Lakewood and I have lived here over 18 years. It is imperative that there is an interchange put at 32nd in order to control the traffic in Lakewood. The mornings are already crazy enough around the lake, adding

the traffic that would flow off of 40th would be awful. I am writing to express my support for an interchange at 32nd Street. As a Lakewood resident for the past 17 years, I have already seen an increase in traffic patterns along Lakewood Parkway.

- I AM STRONGLY IN FAVOR of this interchange being built so that Lakewood Parkway doesn't become the cut through from 40th St. to 32nd.
- We drive daily from Maricopa to Desert Vista. If there is no exit on 32nd St we will be forced to cut through neighborhoods where children are walking to school and traffic will back up.
- If we do not do this, there will be more traffic speeding through our side streets every day and making it even more dangerous for children walking and riding their bikes to school.

#### ***School Access***

- Access is needed to Desert Vista, Akimel and Estrella schools and 32nd Street needs an exit.
- I feel having an interchange at 32nd street would be a benefit for surrounding neighborhoods. Desert Vista is a huge high school and creates a large amount of traffic. If there is no interchange at 32nd street, high school kids and parents dropping off and picking up from the high school will be forced to use surrounding neighborhood side streets.
- It is needed to keep high school students out of the Lakewood subdivision. I strongly urge you to add this interchange.

#### ***Safety***

- For the safety of Lakewood residents, it is imperative there is a 32nd st interchange. We already have serious issues with the speeding traffic and this will get worse as more traffic will be channeled to our area when the new freeway is operational.
- We live in Lakewood and the increased traffic will only add to the already dangerous Lakewood Parkway loop. Please consider this a top priority safety issue.
- The traffic in my neighborhood will be negatively impacted without the 32nd st interchange. This affect, and I believe, will put children and families at risk due to greater car traffic. Now there are many children who walk or ride bikes to the nearby elementary and the high school and without the interchange the increased morning traffic will be troublesome to those children. Their safety is important.
- Because Desert Vista HS is located at 32nd St, there is a significant amount of traffic that would be diverted to residential streets. I believe this is unacceptable and unfair to the residents.

#### ***4.2.2 Summary of Comments Opposing Traffic Interchange***

Safety, traffic volumes, and general opposition were the most commonly referenced reasons for opposing the interchange. In general, opposition comments reflected concern that a TI at 32nd Street would cause an increase in traffic volumes in the area which would negatively impact roadway users, including bicyclists and pedestrians.

Following is a sample of the comments received related to the top three opposition categories.

#### ***Safety***

- NO! For safety of our children not for someone's convenience.
- Speeding is an issue that has been a major problem despite having exits on 40th, 32nd and 24th. I do not believe that a change will occur by the addition of an interchange. However, what I do fear is increased congestion in front of the high school. We have just recently had a student hit by a car and daily I see individuals having extreme difficulty with the Hawk light.

#### ***Traffic Volumes***

- Regarding the projected traffic volumes in 2040, it does not seem accurate that 32nd St would have a traffic volume of 14,600 vehicles, but it would only lessen a total of 4,000 for both 24th St and 40th St combined. The benefits to 24th St and 40th St would seem to be much greater.

- I do not believe that a change will occur by the addition of an interchange. However, what I do fear is increased congestion in front of the high school

***General Opposition***

- I would like to comment that I am not in favor of a 32nd Street access for the new SMF, thanks.
- I am not in favor of an interchange.
- I am not in support of 32nd St interchange.

Samples of other comments expressing opposition are provided below. Summary tables are provided in Appendix C.

***Emergency Access***

- In the event of an emergency, there are multiple points of egress including Chandler and Liberty.

***Right of Way***

- If the interchange is being built, which it should be if we're stuck with this freeway (which ADOT has, by their own reports, still failed to show a need for), then our homes need to be purchased just like the (at least) 10 other Pecos row homes have been.

***Noise***

- Against the interchange but if it has to be built there should be a sound barrier wall that runs the length of the off ramp to 32nd St in addition to the current freeway wall.
- Due to my location being next to the proposed exit at 32nd St, I believe that IF the exit is made that it should be required that the sound wall be extended to the end of the ramp. Without a wall, homes next to the exit ramp are faced with excess noise.

***Cost***

- No interchange at 32nd St. Leave plans as it is today. We have no extra funds to pay for changes.

***Miscellaneous***

- This is such a farce! For one, the design shows only six lanes (3 eastbound, 3 westbound). In addition, it illustrates an enormous amount of space and distance between our properties and the Gila River Indian Reservation that does NOT exist!

***4.2.3 Summary of Comments Neutral toward Traffic Interchange (responded "Unknown")***

Miscellaneous and school access were the most commonly recorded categories when respondents were unsure if the community would benefit from the TI. Most respondents explained that they were unsure of the benefit because of the respondent's distance from the potential TI or simply "not sure" while acknowledging the impact it would have to local traffic. A sample of comments received from the top two neutral categories is provided below.

***Miscellaneous***

- I wouldn't use 32nd street often...my home is nearer the 24th St exit.
- I'm just not sure how much traffic actually uses the current intersection and what the impact of it no longer existing.
- I do not use it often and have other reasonable options (40th and 24th depending on direction traveling). I like the idea of less exits to keep out the casual motorists driving around

***School Access***

- It wouldn't impact me personally because I'd use Chandler Blvd to get to 32nd st but I do think it would have a direct impact on people who live closer to the proposed interchange. I think it would cause traffic headaches for residents and schools. if it's feasible, I think the interchange would be beneficial.
- Not certain how it would affect student safety at the high school or how it would impact traffic in the Lakewood subdivision

- A 32nd Street access would lend convenience for us, however, we have read that additional freeway egresses promote crime, easy access to freeway, and increase neighborhood traffic. On one hand, it makes sense with DV High School on 32nd. We are probably ambivalent, waiting for more, or better, information.