



Catalina Foothills Association

Post Office Box 64546 • Tucson, Arizona 85728-4546

Devoted to the preservation of the unique residential character of the Catalina Foothills for over 47 years

President's Message

The northwest corner of River Road and Campbell Avenue has just been developed, River Road is about to be widened between First Avenue and Campbell Avenue (where part of St. Philip's courtyard may be consumed), an office complex is soon ("early 2000") to be constructed just west of Camino Luz on the north side of River Road, and extensive development is threatened (or underway) for all four corners of the intersection of Campbell Avenue and Skyline Drive.

Now more than at any time that I can remember, it is becoming pretty easy to answer the questions that keep surfacing, "Why does the Catalina Foothills Association exist?", and, "What does it do to justify its existence?"

The answer to the first question has long been included in the banner at the top of our newsletters, and is, simply, "to preserve the *unique residential character of the Catalina Foothills*." The answer to the second question posed above is always, "CFA must *get involved* and do everything in its power to carry out this mission." *You, dear reader, should also get involved!*

CFA's outgoing president, Mr. David Hill commented in our last newsletter that maybe some of our residents are "giddy" about proposed new developments in the Foothills, fantasizing that these pies in the sky will "put the foothills on the map", and "make the area more like Scottsdale" Well, I can tell you emphatically that no one on your CFA board wants the Catalina Foothills to be like Scottsdale! Others, suggested Mr. Hill, feel powerless to fight the big developers and have resigned themselves to urban sprawl. In fact, at our last CFA Annual Meeting, an audience member promised me that commercial development anywhere in the Catalina Foothills was "inevitable."

I must insist that *nothing* is inevitable, and if potential developments threaten to dis-

rupt or destroy the integrity of our neighborhoods and/or the quality of our lives, then we are ready to take action and do whatever is possible to preclude or ameliorate the impact of such developments.

It is unfortunate that we find ourselves being reactive instead of proactive, but I sometimes feel that we're like fire fighters who can't go fight the fire until it's started and we learn where it is.

The tone and intent "President's Message" will be continued in the following articles about recent and imminent developments in our neighborhoods.

St. Philip's Church Courtyard

On Tuesday, February 8, 2000, the Pima County Board of Supervisors voted to initiate its right of eminent domain and condemn a portion of an irreplaceable property, St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church's scenic and historic courtyard, in order to widen River Road just east of Campbell Avenue. This action was taken despite Supervisor Raúl Grijalva's motion to consider an alignment of River Road that would spare this property. The result of this hearing was that Pima County now owns the southernmost 15 feet of courtyard land along the north side of River Road. If this land is devoured by the widening of River Road, the south wall of the courtyard and some of its stately mesquite trees will be destroyed. The BOS chose this course of action apparently because the purchase of the land on the south side of River Road (occupied by Bank One's parking lot and a fiber-optics "utility box") would cost \$2 to \$3 million more than the land on the north side of the road. It is this author's understanding that many neighborhood residents were outraged by this outcome but may have failed to express this feeling to the BOS. Our supervisor, Mike Boyd, was quoted by the Arizona Daily Star as saying, "We've gone back and forth on the alignment and we thought we were doing

a favor by taking what little we were taking." Boyd also indicated that "most" of his constituents who have contacted him (except church members) "favor the county plan." Why he dismissed church members as somehow not being significant in approval/disapproval of the county plan is a mystery to me.

The March 3, 2000 issue of the Arizona Daily Star reported that Tucson city councilman and vice-mayor Steve Leál proposed a plan in which the city of Tucson would annex the St. Philip's Episcopal Church (and its charming courtyard) and the commercial St. Philip's Plaza on the south side of River Road (east of Campbell Avenue). This annexation is projected to raise \$400,000 to \$500,000 in tax revenues per year. The city could "borrow the entire sum now and pay it back over time" to pay for the more expensive southern alignment of River Road and to spare the church's courtyard property. BOS members Raúl Grijalva, Sharon Bronson and Dan Eckstrom expressed support for Leál's plan.

Led by Tony Luebbermann, local residents and church members have been picketing the Campbell Avenue/River Road intersection with placards appealing to passing motorists for support for saving the entire courtyard from the bulldozers' blades. This has been a different kind of picket line, with no visible anger; on the contrary, there is intentional, enthusiastic, friendly waving to passersby!

Mike Boyd's reaction to this new development was interesting; he was quoted by the Arizona Daily Star (March 3, 2000) as saying, "Then right before construction starts, they come up with this historic preservation angle out of nowhere." Before any of you criticizes Supervisor Boyd for his lack of awareness of your opposition to Pima County's plan, please consider that Mr. Boyd says that those constituents who contacted him favored this plan. That must mean that *you* didn't contact him about this (either that, or you are a church member, whose opinion doesn't count). Consider yourself admonished (again) to get involved!

The major concern with this new city plan (another realignment of River Road, now to the south to gobble up the parking lot of Bank One) is that it will delay the start of the long-anticipated (14 years!!) widening of River Road between First Avenue and Campbell Avenue. County Transportation Director Brooks Keenan has warned that redesigning the road would delay the project for up to a year. In

the absence of these changes, construction was scheduled to begin this summer.

River Park Office Complex

There are now signs along River Road, just west of Camino Luz, which promise a new "River Park" office complex. A telephone number is included on this sign (293-9000). Upon calling this number, I was immediately transferred to Mr. Gus Hearon, of the Ashland Group (1050 E. River Road, suite #300).

Mr. Hearon lives in Catalina Foothills Estates #7. He reports that 3.3 acres of the 4.5-acre property will be utilized to construct an new office complex, tentatively titled "River Park" offices, located immediately west of Camino Luz on the north side of River Road, on the site of the former Desert Foothills Baptist Church. Mr. Hearon assured me that this will be an attractive set of buildings, built of stucco over concrete block, and fashioned to the Santa Fe style, each with a Mexican tile roof. These buildings will be very much like the River Plaza (at 1050 E. River Road) in appearance and quality.

Mr. Hearon insists that his new project be in keeping with the style and nature of our Catalina Foothills neighborhood. My only area of concern is his parking lot, and how extensive and eyesore-ish it will be. Mr. Hearon has told me that his "blue lines" have been approved by Pima County, and he says that has the green light to proceed.

Get Involved

Please get involved, and call or write to one of your Catalina Foothills Board members, or, preferably:

Pima County Board of Supervisors
c/o Clerk of the Board
130 West Congress
Tucson, Arizona 85701
740-8126

Tucson Mayor and City Council
c/o City Clerk
255 West Alameda
Tucson, Arizona 85701
791-4700

Send letters to: Letters to the Editor,
The Arizona Daily Star
P.O. Box 26807
Tucson, Arizona 85726-6807
e-mail: letters@azstarnet.com
FAX: 573-4141

Annual Meeting

Acting on behalf of the Catalina Foothills Association, vice-president Sterling Torrance called the Annual Meeting to order at 7:20 p.m., in the Murphey Gallery of St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church.

Dr. Torrance followed his welcome of the audience of approximately 250 members with a few opening remarks concerning the *raison d'être* of the Catalina Foothills Association ("CFA"). This has already been discussed in the President's Message (above).

Proposed and accepted by the general membership for re-election to the Board of Directors of the CFA were: Barbara Burke, David Elwood, Lera Gates, Tony Luebberrmann, David W. Smith, and Sterling Torrance.

Tony Luebberrmann appealed to the membership to support endeavors of the Association through payment of their dues.

The Pima County Board of Supervisors voted that week to condemn a portion of the St. Philip's courtyard so that they could purchase same for the widening of River Road at that point. Petitions against the condemnation of this church property were placed at a table in the back of the room.

The program topic was:

Shopping Malls in Neighborhoods: Are They Necessary?

The first speaker was Katherine Jacobson, president of the Catalina Foothills Condominiums, Co-Chair of Skyline-Campbell Citizens Committee, and consultant in political and financial issues in the Catalina Foothills and larger Tucson community.

Ms. Jacobson proceeded to tell us that, since the early 1960s, "Bullseye" zoning has been shown on County maps. The adopted 1983 Catalina Foothills Area Plan, which was incorporated into the Pima County Comprehensive Plan, shows zoning on the four corners of the Skyline Drive/Campbell Avenue intersection as commercial: either CBI (banks, restaurants, shops, etc.) or TR (offices, apartments, etc.) Murphey Investment Trust ("MIT") originally owned all four corners. El Cortijo partnership purchased the northeast corner and is developing 10 to 12 art galleries and a café. El Cortijo also has the southwest corner in escrow. In addition, El Cortijo believes that it has a binding contract to buy the other two corners. MIT thinks this contract has expired, and, therefore, they have the right to sell the northwest corner to Westcor, and the remaining corner (the southeast corner) to a Murphey grandson. At this time, arbitra-

tion has not brought resolution and the matter is now in the courts. The Bank of America owns the buildings on the northwest corner and is not interested in selling at this time. The Skyline-Campbell Citizens Committee ("SCCC") is looking into traffic congestion, air pollution, elementary-school concerns, ordinances (native vegetation), sizes of any developments, and who is going to pay for all of the support structures that will need to be in place. The SCCC believes that "smart growth" is very important here.

The second speaker of the evening was Ben Goff, Pima County Manager of Transportation System Division. Mr. Goff told us that a report titled "Campbell Avenue/Skyline Drive Intersection Area Traffic Impact and Traffic Operations Analysis" was just about ready [ed. note: we will discuss this report later in this newsletter]. Mr. Goff estimated that there has been a 2.5- to 3-percent increase in Skyline-Drive traffic each year. In fact, mid-day traffic is now almost as heavy as peak-hour traffic. A large development, such as Westcor's 420,000-square-foot mall, would result in an average of 17,000 *additional* cars per day passing through the Skyline Drive/Campbell Avenue intersection. A smaller development would result in an average increase of 3000 cars per day. A six-lane road (on Skyline Drive) would be needed to accommodate the traffic generated by such a large development, at a cost of 12 to 15 million dollars (minimum), and potentially twice as much. Widening this road would be expensive, natural landscape would be lost, and construction of retaining walls would be required. No zoning conditions were put on this property originally; however, any potential development would have to meet county ordinances, although the latter are weak. When the improvement of River Road is complete, traffic congestion on Skyline Drive may be eased.

The third speaker on the evening's agenda was Ms. Gayle Hartmann, archaeologist, co-chair Pima County Open Space and Acquisition Review Committee, Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan member, and former Planning and Zoning Commissioner. Ms. Hartmann informed the audience that, upon analysis, it appears that the Buffers Ordinance doesn't apply to any proposed development at Skyline and Campbell. The Hillside-Development Ordinance applies to ridge lines and slopes. The Wash/Riparian Ordinance does not apply because the affected washes are too small. The Native-Plant Ordinance covers 24 or more

plants. There are three options under this ordinance: 1.) 30% of land set aside and nothing built upon it; 2.) Transplant: move existing plants during building and replant plus add to the number; 3.) Replacement: go to a nursery and replace all removed plants. The SCCC could possibly look at the area and see if a corridor exists which would tie in with the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. This area is an example of how important zoning is and having covenants that protect the land.

As expected, questions from the floor became a major part of the evening's program. Here most of pertinent ones:

Question: What are the plans for the SW corner and SE corner of Skyline/Campbell?

Ms. Jacobson's reply: El Cortijo has the SW corner in escrow and has plans for an office building or high-end grocery store. El Cortijo has plans for a hotel on the SE corner. However, this depends on whether the courts decide in favor of El Cortijo.

Question: Campbell Avenue is a Scenic Route; does this mean that it is protected from further development?

Mr. Goff's reply: This does not mean that it cannot be widened.

Question: Is it possible to down-zone [the Campbell/Skyline property]?

Mr. Goff's reply: The county lost the authority to down-zone when the Arizona state legislature passed a law taking that right away. This particular property/area could possibly be used as a test case of this law.

Question: Is the widening/straightening of Campbell Avenue on the County's agenda?

Mr. Goff's reply: Not at this time; this was looked into in the '80s, and the cost was pretty high at that time. The County has reduced the speed limit and heavily posted the road.

Question: What impact will the bullseye [development] have on Campbell Avenue?

Mr. Goff's reply: It is felt that an additional 4000 cars would use Campbell Avenue to get to and from the bullseye development.

Question: Current roads (Skyline Drive, et al.) can't handle the traffic; how much work would be done before a development is built?

Mr. Goff's reply: Pima County has not done a good job of coordinating this type of improvement in the past. Perhaps an improvement district should be created.

Question: When will First Avenue be completed and what will the cost be?

Mr. Goff's reply: Completion of the road is scheduled for June and the landscaping should be done in August. Three million [dollars] has been spent on underground work: the wash crossings have been very difficult and expensive.

Question: Concessions will probably need to be made. What do the foothills residents want and wouldn't it be better to focus on specific issues?

Ms. Jacobson's reply:

Our [the SCCC's] position is this:

1.) The issues to preserve the health, safety and welfare of the residents and visitors in this area be addressed in a development plan. We specifically are concerned about school children who attend Manzanita Elementary School, located less than 700 feet from the northwest corner [of the proposed Westcor development]. In addition, there are two other elementary schools, one middle school,

and one elementary school site, all within 3/10 of a mile of the intersection, for whom traffic safety and air quality are important issues.

2.) That any development plan include appropriate transition from existing development to new development and that architectural compatibility be established during the review process.

3.) That all ordinances be enforced, including those that protect the large stands of saguaros, other native plants, washes, and scenic routes that integral to the greater community's sense of the Catalina Foothills.

The SCCC recommends that the possible Westcor development be 1/3 of the proposed size.

Question: When you gave the acreage for the individual 4 corners, it does not add up to 30 acres per corner. Why not?

Mr. Goff's reply: The original acreage and type of development allowed has been shifted between the four corners to allow more development in one area and less in another.

Question: I wrote to the Pima County Board of Supervisors and Chuck Huckleberry, and Mr. Huckleberry wrote back and suggested that I write to the Arizona State Legislature's representatives requesting repeal of the down-zoning amendment.

Mr. Goff's reply: I suggest that all residents write to their state legislative members.

The membership in attendance was asked to fill out the exit polls located at the back door before leaving. The results of this informal exit poll are now available. Participants were asked to choose two out of three possible outcomes for the development of the northwest corner of Skyline Drive and Campbell Avenue. The three possible potential developments were:

- A. The Westcor conceptual plan (a 420,000-square-foot upscale shopping mall).
- B. A smaller commercial development, similar in size (120,000 square feet) to St. Philip's Plaza.
- C. A desert park (perhaps like Tohono Chul Park).

Here is how people "voted":

option	number of "votes"
A only	1
A or B	2
B only	7
B or C	91
C only	38
total =	139

These results show a clear preference for something smaller than the large "La Encantada" mall. After the meeting, many mentioned the desirability of the desert park, but realized that the purchase price of the 37-acre parcel would be prohibitively high. Is there an angel out there somewhere?

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Skyline/Campbell Development

In 1958, the County approved a long-range Catalina Area Zoning Plan which granted CB-1 (local business) zoning to major foothills intersections, including the one at Campbell Avenue and Skyline Drive, which was designated as a "Village Center" at that time, and as a "Community Activity Center" in the Pima County Comprehensive Plan of 1992. The Arizona state legislature recently passed a law banning the County from down-zoning such land without compensating the developer.

According to the *Arizona Daily Star* (Sunday, March 12, 2000), Sharon Bronson, chair of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, stated that, because of hard zoning, "Our hands are tied;" when a developer shows up for building permits for the Campbell/Skyline intersection, the County will have no choice but to issue them. (public pressure can alter plans; you voice is critical!)

Here is a summary of facts about the Skyline Drive/Campbell Avenue intersection and projections about its development and that development's impact on local traffic. This summary draws its information from Pima County Department of Transportation's February, 2000 "Intersection Area Traffic Impact and Traffic Operations Analysis," the above-mentioned article in the *Arizona Daily Star*, and comments made by Mr. Ben Goff and Ms. Katherine Jacobson at the Catalina Foothills Association's 2000 Annual Meeting (previously discussed) and afterward.

The Skyline/Campbell intersection itself contains the following developable property:

The northwest corner: 37 acres proposed for a 400,000-square-foot upscale shopping mall ("La Encantada"): a 120,000-square-foot major department store (perhaps Nordstrom's), 10,000 square feet of office space, 80,000 square feet of restaurants, and 190,000 square feet of other retail establishments. Two non-signalized access points are projected: one on Campbell Avenue and one on Skyline Drive.

The northeast corner: 1.9 acres occupied by three buildings, all containing art galleries, and one containing a café. This is the El Cortijo development. Access is by one driveway (joint use with Settler's West Gallery) on Campbell Avenue, and a right-turn-in, right-turn-out driveway on Skyline Drive.

The southeast corner: 7.1 acres assumed to be developed for retail use, with 20% of the parcel area used for building floor area. Assumed access: one right-turn-in, right-turn-

out driveway on Skyline Drive and one right-turn-in, right-turn-out driveway on Campbell Avenue.

The southwest corner: 8.2 acres assumed to be developed for retail use, with 20% of the parcel area used for building floor area. Assumed access: one right-turn-in, right-turn-out driveway on Skyline Drive and one right-turn-in, right-turn-out driveway on Campbell Avenue.

If all four corners (including the NW corner, "La Encantada") are developed by the year 2010, nearly 24,000 additional cars will be on our roads (17,000 from La Encantada), and nearby intersections (especially Skyline Drive/Campbell Avenue) will be clearly over-capacity, with traffic delays at peak hours of nearly three minutes, and rush-hour traffic on Skyline Drive backed up more than a mile (even today it is backed up a half-mile) from Campbell Avenue.

Therefore, to mitigate this traffic problem, Pima County suggests the widening of Skyline Drive from four to six lanes for 3.2 miles from Orange Grove Road to Pontatoc Road, and improvement of the Skyline/Campbell intersection. This is projected to cost a minimum of \$14 million. However, Pima County has only \$3.4 million available to improve Skyline Drive (and the County is not expected to push for another transportation bond issue for five years). In addition, the carefully (and expensively) landscaped slopes of Skyline Drive near La Paloma would be removed and replaced with noise-abatement walls. Moreover, even with these road improvements (and all that money spent, which Pima County does not even have) peak-hour traffic delays at Skyline/Campbell are estimated to be 84 seconds, which is considerably more than the average motorist deems acceptable. Furthermore, Campbell Avenue is *not* projected to be improved, and it is already handling too much traffic north of River Road (currently 12,000 cars/day); development of all four corners of Skyline/Campbell (including La Encantada) is predicted to result in 4,800 *more* cars on Campbell Avenue each day.

Interestingly, a written survey soliciting opinions concerning the Westcor ("La Encantada") development at Skyline/Campbell was mailed to residents of Catalina Foothills Estates #8. Of 138 questionnaires sent, 90 were returned, with comments. Of these, 92% wrote that this 420,000-square-foot shopping mall was too large to be near residential neighborhoods!

**CATALINA FOOTHILLS ASSOCIATION
2000 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Catalina Foothills Association is a homeowners' organization which was begun around 1952, when this area of the Catalina foothills was beginning to be developed. Although Catalina Foothills Estates #7, #8, and #9 now have their own associations (and they are good ones!), these came to be only after their individual neighborhoods were developed and reached sufficient maturity to look after and preserve their own best interests. We and they share the same goal: maintaining the highest possible standard for quality of life for the people who live in our neighborhood (the Catalina Foothills). That is our *only* goal; we have no political or social agendas. Here's who we are:

NAME	AREA	TELEPHONE
Sterling Torrance, President	7	299-9026
Lera Gates, Vice-President	2	299-6266
Dr. Jerry Leroy, Vice-President	5	299-2620
T.S. Edison, Sec./Treasurer	5	299-2712
Sue Brinkmeyer	1	577-6208
Barbara Burke	7	299-2889
David B. Elwood	7	299-4393
George A. Kiersch	4	299-3776
Tony Luebbermann	8	299-4953
Polly O'Bier	9	299-2599
James J. Perrine	3	299-8271
Dr. David Wayne Smith	5	529-0155
Virginia Sonett	5	299-3937
John Trang	1	299-1019

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