

## Infrastructure

By Lauren Serrato

Infrastructure plays a major role in the success of economic development in cities around the world, specifically in the West Valley as it continues to experience exponential growth. At WESTMARC, the three areas of primary focus are water, transportation and communication/connectivity.

The federal infrastructure investments in Arizona trickle into the West Valley, as seen by the increase in transit services, power and water availability and regional improvements, including freeway improvements and arterial connectors.

As a former Goodyear City Council member and current Legislator, Representative Joanne Osborne has experienced the growth of the West Valley first hand. Osborne highlighted the creation of the 303 as the most impactful in the region.

“I, with all our city and county leaders, have felt the incredible growth of industries, manufacturing, distribution, healthcare, housing, and jobs. These important systems are moving our goods, services and people. Our current and future residents are feeling the impacts of these roadways allowing them to work, live, and play. Quality of life, always the goal, is in part, attained with strong systems,” she said.

Osborne added that the West Valley will continue to see major construction, all in which will benefit the state now and in the future.

“Infrastructure can be seen in many forms; roads, broadband, water and energy systems. Government should be focused on the safe movement of people and goods. The West Valley will continue to need to expand current roads, traffic signals, and add lanes to our interstate system,” she said.

“We also need the creativity of new ways to move people, the I-10 reliever with the SR30, the creation of I-11, truck routes that need to make sense for the expanding growth, while recognizing our rural communities. We have an opportunity to usher in a new Prop 400E, since the past 20 year plan expires. The West Valley will benefit from the expansion of the 60, thoroughly connecting the 303 south, maintaining current systems, and expanding major arterials. We also appropriated millions of dollars to roadway projects in this year's state budget, but we all know, is only the tip of the iceberg.”

The city of Buckeye currently has multiple freeway construction and renovation projects. From road widening to new traffic signals, Buckeye currently has 20 active transportation related Capital Improvement Program projects in varying phases of completion to help the city's short-term needs.

“As one of the fastest growing cities in the country, Buckeye is working hard to keep up with our transportation infrastructure now and well into the future,” John O'Halloran, Public Information Officer for the city of Buckeye said.

“We are also working closely with the Arizona Department of Transportation on the I-10 Widening Project which will greatly increase freeway capacity and improve traffic flow. The \$82

million project includes an extra travel lane in each direction between Verrado Way and State Route 85 and completely redesigned traffic interchanges at Watson and Miller Roads.”

Major elements of the project include adding one general purpose lane in each direction from SR 85 to Verrado Way, reconstructing traffic interchanges at Miller and Watson Road to a diverging diamond design, fully reconstructing and widening Miller and Watson Road at I-10 to provide a minimum of two lanes in each direction, constructing sound walls along I-10 and more.

“We know transportation issues are a high priority on our residents list and that’s why the city established the Transportation Master Plan in 2018. With resident input, the TMP identified the community’s long-range vision for how the transportation network should evolve to serve the growing region,” O’Halloran said.

“At only 14% built out, the TMP is part of Buckeye’s goal to continue developing a city where residents can live, work and play while enjoying a great quality of life.”

The city of Goodyear is also doing its part in being proactive in its water management with the opening of the city's new Surface Water Treatment Facility.

Javier Setovich, Goodyear’s Public Works Director said the facility is a reliable service for both citizens and businesses throughout the city.

“It is a great tool in the toolbox to provide reliable water service today and tomorrow. It also adds to our portfolio of water resources,” he said.

“Essentially, the city found itself reaching its limit in its ability to provide groundwater. We were tapping into all of our resources. And what this gave us is the ability of bringing our Colorado River water allocation to the city directly for delivery to our citizens.”

Setovich said water’s ability to play a role in a city’s strong infrastructure is simple, “No water, nothing happens.”

“It’s vital to have the infrastructure in place to provide reliable service but just as importantly, to be ahead of the curve on growth. Being ready to take on that growth is really important. So infrastructure has to be in great condition to provide services today but it also has to have enough capacity to be a tool of development.”

Representative Osborne agreed that water serves as a vital role in the lives of not only West Valley residents, but all Arizonans.

“Water - the most current, critical of issues facing all Arizonans, should be at the forefront of every elected leader. I am happy we allocated \$1 billion to this category. Not only addressing current issues, but focusing on new sources of water and the best ways we can use every drop we have. Arizona is a state full of pioneers and innovation. I have no doubt, we will come up with great solutions, we have done it in the past and will again,” she said.

“You hear a lot about desalination and pipelines for water from our neighboring flood-torn states, but also the conservation each of us can do, which includes ways to reuse every drop. Now, fill up your bottle with water, put down your phone, travel on a road and go take a hike in our beautiful White Tank Mountains.”

Since passing the House of Representatives in November 2021, the nearly \$2 trillion Build Back Better Infrastructure Plan is a reflection of the transportation, water, construction and community projects throughout the West Valley, all of which create new jobs for its residents.

Osborne said the growth won't be expected to slow anytime soon.

"Much of our past tax dollars went towards the growth of the East Valley and Phoenix, but today, our eyes look west," she said.

"We have many more years of growth and need to focus on safely moving our people and cargo. We are the logistics hub and perfect place between the routes from the Ports of California to the rest of the Nation. It is an exciting time as we plan for the future and specific highways, interstates, and arterial roadways."