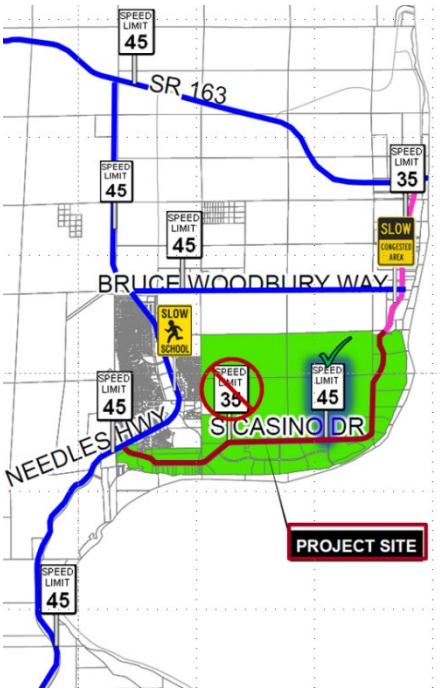
County plans $93 million Casino Drive SID Improvements, but keeps existing 35 mph speed limit

By the Laughlin Economic Development Corporation

County Public Works Department says it's too difficult and too expensive to increase Laughlin's Casino Drive speed limit to 45 mph, like all of the other access roads to the Hotel/Casino area

That was the statement by Clark County Public Works ("*Public Works*") to the audience of the County's first Casino Drive Special Improvement District ("*SID*") Public Informational Meeting on August 10th in the meeting room of the Clark County Regional Government Center in Laughlin. The Laughlin project goes 4 miles from Needles Highway to Harrah's at the south end of the casinos, and involves water, sewer, and full roadway improvements. Initially, the 80-foot Right-of-Way ("*ROW*") was to be increased to 100 or 103 feet. But, as with the speed limit, this is now to be kept at 80 feet to cut costs, while still allowing safety improvements and providing 2 lanes of traffic in each direction.



Objections from the audience about the speed limit, brought about the admission that some of the western portions of the roadway could be raised a bit above 35 mph. The Laughlin Economic Development Corporation ("*LEDC*") *Stakeholder Status Report,* sent to Public Works days before the meeting, pointed out that 45 mph is the standard arterial street speed limit on all the other main streets in Laughlin (*see map*). LEDC further observed that this is a one-time opportunity to "*facilitate*" visitors' use of the direct Casino Drive route, instead of the Woodbury/school route through the residential area, AND eliminate the inconsistent reduced Casino Drive speed limit. If the SID replicates the existing 35 mph roadway, Laughlin can *NEVER* reasonably (*literally*) go back and increase it, but they could always reduce an increased speed limit in the future if congestion dictated.

The County's engineering consultant, GCW Engineering, admitted some stretches could be raised to 40 mph with the current design. LEDC believes this is a very important issue for the future of Laughlin and settling for anything less than 45 mph should *NOT* be taken lightly or hidden behind a claim of "*cost-reduction*" or "*simplification.*"

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada ("*RTC*") has indicated its willingness to cover the entire cost of the roadway widening, excluding sewer and water, said Denis Cederburg, Director of CCPW. Normally, the property owners would have to cover the cost of curbs, gutters, sidewalks and street lights. However, the individual property owner's estimated SID assessments provided by Public Works still included the "curb & gutter" costs. RTC would draw on the Vegas Valley allotments to pay the difference between what Laughlin has accumulated in gas tax funds (about $1 million a year) and the roadway improvement cost. It was said that the project's total estimate of $93 million includes around $30 million for the roadway, with the rest for the water, sewer, and a $20 million contingency. The bottom line is that current statutes require the estimated property values after SID improvements must increase by at least the amount of the assessment, or the assessment must be

reduced to the amount of the increased value.

First Casino Drive SID public Informational Meeting in nearly 3 years reveals major problems

A Comparative Timeline was included in the LEDC Status Report, comparing the original Timeline, based on the GCW Contract, with the current estimated Timeline, not contested by Public Works. It showed the Public Works Director authorized GCW to begin work on October 14, 2019, with the project ending by March 1, 2023, being a 41-month schedule. The latest, best-case, scenario now shows the project concluding on May 31, 2026, or 80 months since the start of the design work. That is a *delay* of over 3 years (*39 months*)!

Some explanation was offered by Clark County, saying they have never before formed such a unique multiple-purpose SID. Further, the Timeline has been extended due to issues raised by the Clark County Water Reclamation District ("CCWRD") and to a far greater degree by the Las Vegas Valley Water District ("*LVVWD*"). Public Works said "it's is not a purveyor of sewer or water services, and must design to their LVVWD and CCWRD respective design criteria."

Moratorium is defined as "*a temporary prohibition of an activity*" -- While the County has objected to the term "*moratorium*", a term studiously avoided by Public Works: i) the Laughlin Bay Marina was recently denied water service for 5 existing fire hydrants, meaning no development could occur on the unbuilt portion of its property until water is provided by the SID; ii) an Emerald River subdivision was recently mapped by the County with the provision that no development can occur until water is provided by the SID; iii) other property owners have been told the same thing – the above Timeline estimates SID water availability in mid-2026 – in fact, the above indicates there's a *temporary* (*until mid-2026*) *prohibition of an activity* (*development*) – aka, a Moratorium!

It was learned that the County staff failed to notify the 26 property owners of the meeting, most of which didn't attend, and both the water and sewer districts failed to send representatives to the meeting. There was no video conferencing opportunity provided.

A second "*Do-Over*" stakeholders meeting, to rectify the above oversight, is scheduled for 10 am - 12 noon, Wednesday October 12th, again in the meeting room of the Clark County Regional Government Center in Laughlin. Notices have gone out to all property owners and presumably other relevant parties, and video conferencing will be available by emailing a request and video conferencing information to Ms. Bridget Russo, SID Coordinator, at Bridget.Russo@clarkcountynv.gov.

GCW Engineering, a Las Vegas firm, is assisting Public Works in the design of the sewer and water for the SID, and is being paid from an allocation of up to $900,000 from the Fort Mohave Valley Development Fund, approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The fund is a unique account reserved for Laughlin from the sale and lease of public land in Laughlin which the County holds in trust for the community's infrastructure development. The audience was told that $500,000 had been spent, to date, and assured that the remaining money is sufficient to cover the balance of the design work. GCW is also designing the roadway for the RTC under a separate contract, and said that 60% of the roadway design and 30% of sewer and water designs have been completed.

Las Vegas Valley Water District has the water, but can't deliver until mid-2026

The existing 18-inch water main from Harrah's to Needles Highway (*the "SID District"*) is deemed by LVVWD to have reached capacity, and the water district wants to add a 200-million-gallon storage tank and a trunk line the entire length of the SID District, ranging from 42 inches at Harrah's to 24 inches at Needles Highway to supplement the existing line. The LVVWD admitted the existing line has been allowed to serve areas outside the District it was designed to serve. Public Works agreed with LEDC that LVVWD needs to reconsider that policy of overserving – "*if you're assessed, you deserve water!"*

Further, the water and sewer districts insisted on using the maximum design-density of the resort-hotel zoning of 33 dwellings per acre and now, after over 3 years, decided they need an "*Absorption Study*." The LEDC pointed out that the higher density is not consistent with the character of Laughlin, and about half of the SID District is so steep and hilly that it is not feasible to provide for such a capacity. An audience member pointed out that since both water and sewer districts depend on new connection fees, a moratorium cuts off the money to pay for expansion of trunk lines and related equipment such as pump stations and storage tanks. The only other revenue source is rates for service, indicating customers can expect huge rate increases after the general election.

Water was indicated as the SID schedule-driver, and since no LVVWD representatives attended the meeting, no explanation was given as to why the program Timeline has slipped by over 3 years. Hopefully the October 12th Do-Over meeting will be overall more informative.

22-0922 Casino Dr SID Aug 10, 2022 Stakeholders Meeting Press Release -LEDC.pdf
LEDC is a 501(C)3 non-profit whose mission/vision is to attract -- and keep growing -- businesses, industries, and housing providers that Laughlin needs, and for which we know our existing residents and visitors can support.
For more information, contact: Martin Knauss at "laughlinedc@gmail.com"