



Do our elected representatives even care?

[Commentary by David Folts](#)

2010-04-12 14:06:36

I have attended the South Mountain Citizen Advisory Team meetings both in January and March of this year and would like to share some of this information. The meetings are hosted and controlled by the Arizona Department of Transportation to where people appointed by ADOT can make non-binding recommendations on the proposed South Mountain Loop 202.

First off, ADOT has stated that they will reduce costs on construction of the proposed Loop 202. With this, Ahwatukee Foothills will get a low cost, generic eight-lane highway immediately south of our neighborhoods with all the noise, congestion and pollution that comes with it. I wonder how this will affect sound abatement construction practices normally used in highway design and how Ahwatukee Foothills will be shortchanged in other areas.

Secondly, ADOT has stated that it owns 95 percent of the right of way that it needs under the new reduced cost program, thus only needing to purchase very little remaining property to construct this now eight-lane proposed highway that was once going to be a 10-lane highway. About three or four years ago ADOT had a meeting at the Grace Inn and informed many Ahwatukee Foothills residents that ADOT was going to purchase the homes indicated on an ADOT supplied map before construction of proposed South Mountain Loop 202. Now all this has changed. At the SMCAT meeting ADOT laid out a new map showing that many of the homes previously slated for the right of way purchase would no longer be considered for purchase by the state. To make matters worse, not one of the many homeowners involved was informed of the latest developments.

With all of this happening I must ask where are our state, county and city elected representatives? Can the state just knock us over like a bunch of dominoes and never be held responsible for poor decision making? Do our elected representatives even care?

As I drive on the below grade highways through residential areas I ask why do they rate for less intrusion through their neighborhoods and we don't. I can only think their elected representatives were actively involved with ADOT on the highway design and construction process from the very beginning. In case you don't know, the proposed South Mountain Loop 202 will be an elevated highway at about 22 feet above grade. If you feel the same way I do please contact our state, county and city representatives.

When was the last time ADOT had an evening meeting in Ahwatukee Foothills so all the residents could attend? Why does ADOT hold the SMCAT meetings at South Mountain Community College instead of having them here in Ahwatukee Foothills?

I ask again, do our elected officials even care? If ADOT is going to build this proposed highway at least give the people of Ahwatukee Foothills the same consideration and fairness that other Arizona residents received when putting a commercial arterial through residential neighborhoods.

David Folts is founder of the community group Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202. Reach him at southmtnloop202@yahoo.com.