



The following questions or issues were brought forward as part of the August 12, 2008 (rescheduled from July 24, 2008) and August 28, 2008, South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team (SMCAT) meetings and designated as parking lot issues because the study team needed to conduct research to address the question or issue accordingly. In addition, questions submitted on blue question cards by SMCAT members and the public are answered below. Each comment received on a blue question card is written in this document as submitted. Each parking lot issue is addressed by presenting the question asked, followed by the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) written response.

This document is divided into three sections. The first section lists the questions from the August 12 meeting and the associated ADOT responses. The subsequent section contains the ADOT responses to the questions from the August 28 meeting. The final section lists any questions that will be addressed in a future parking lot issues memorandum.

Questions addressed from the August 12 meeting

Topic	SMCAT member/public question	ADOT response
Cost estimate	When ADOT releases the revised cost estimates to construct the proposed South Mountain Freeway on Pecos Road in the upcoming months, will the cost exceed \$2.5 billion? In the recent past, how close has the ADOT projected cost estimate been to the actual cost on segments for the Loop 202 and Loop 101?	The cost estimate will be updated for the September 25, 2008, SMCAT meeting. There are many variables that impact the changes in total cost between the preliminary estimates and the actual construction, including the time between initial studies and construction of facility and economic variability of unit costs.
Economic impacts	I want information about the loss of homeowners association's funds for those homes that would be removed as part of this potential project.	ADOT would compensate the homeowner associations for this loss of revenue. The negotiations for the amount of compensation would occur during the property acquisition process, if the freeway were constructed. ADOT, in coordination with the State Attorney General's Office, is currently in the process of developing a policy to address this issue.

Topic	SMCAT member/public question	ADOT response
Economic impacts (continued)	What should be expected for the loss of home values and the associated loss of property taxes and tax revenues for the state, city and schools?	<p>The effects on loss of property tax are addressed in the economic section of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Because the number of homes being impacted is relatively negligible in the context of the total number of homes in the City of Phoenix, as well as the fact that many residents would likely relocate within the city, the effects on city revenues were deemed negligible when considering the W55 and E1 alternatives.</p> <p>Home values are also addressed in the DEIS. In general, many variables contribute to home value including location, comparative pricing, economic conditions, growth markets and personal preferences. Studies to assess freeway effects on home values have had variable conclusions but a general consensus is that freeways in proximity to homes do not cause depreciation, but may cause those homes adjacent to the freeway to appreciate at a slightly slower rate than other homes.</p>
	What about the loss of the community's desirability due to the freeway "locking in" the community? It would be a degradation to the entire Ahwatukee community.	Ahwatukee is defined by geographic, political and transportation boundaries. The South Mountains, Gila River Indian Community (GRIC), Pecos Road and Interstate 10 (I-10) serve as those boundaries, respectively. In essence, the proposed action would replace Pecos Road.
	What about the cost of air quality and the health issues created for residents and schoolchildren?	Air quality impacts associated with the Action and No-Action alternatives will be discussed at the SMCAT air quality panel meetings.
	What about the loss of value of the South Mountain Park and the ridgelines, which would be destroyed?	The transfer of Phoenix South Mountain Park/Preserve (SMPP) land to a freeway use represents 0.2 percent of the total land within SMPP. Considering the very small amount of land that would be converted, the land conversion would occur in one corner of the park and the conversion has been planned, known about and approved through adopted land use planning, the impact to the park's value is deemed minimal. Additionally, while in preliminary stages of planning, ADOT's current intentions would be to compensate the park's owner (City of Phoenix) with replacement land. Private owners of other portions of the South Mountains would be compensated as well. This cost is included in the right-of-way portion of the project cost estimate.
	What about the loss of value and future tax revenue on state trust land? There should be an amount for the value of the state trust land, which will be devalued.	ADOT would compensate the State Land Department for the acquisition of its property. This cost is included in the right-of-way portion of the project cost estimate. There is no conclusive evidence that State Trust Land would be devalued.

Topic	SMCAT member/public question	ADOT response
Economic impacts (continued)	ADOT has put a monetary figure on time. Can they put a monetary value on vision or view? Do you have a value that takes this into account? The loss of monetary value is huge for the people who are left behind.	Effects on visual quality are analyzed and will be presented in the DEIS. The methodology used quantifies the impact through assignment of numeric values to visual quality and character to allow for meaningful comparison of impact. However, it is not the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to comprehensively assign monetary value to impact analyses, as this leads to a cost-benefit analyses not necessarily desired under NEPA. Several aspects of the environment (i.e., social conditions and visual quality) typically require a qualitative assessment of impacts because of the variables associated with variations in human perception.
	Has anyone done a study of the economic impacts to the area after the Loop 101 was constructed? It seems that the Loop 101 was in a similar situation, with the Salt-River Pima Maricopa Indian Community on one side. This should be done as a holistic view. You might be able to get a better idea about this project's secondary impacts by looking at the secondary impacts from that project. I would also like to see what the impacts were on the area schools.	An economic study was done during the project development for the Loop 101 to anticipate the area conditions after freeway construction. A study was not performed after the construction of the freeway that assessed the current economic conditions.
	What was done to evaluate residential property values in the Eastern Section of the Study Area?	For the right-of-way cost estimate, professional appraisers were used to evaluate the residential and commercial property values throughout the Study Area. Acquisition cost estimates were prepared in conformity with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition and the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP 2005). Evaluations were based on recent comparable sales and current listings, and discussions with knowledgeable market participants (real estate agents, developers and area buyers and sellers) familiar with the land in the various market segments.
Miscellaneous	So for this project, how much money has already been spent on this study?	As of June 30, 2008, ADOT has spent \$86.4 million of Proposition 300 money and \$20.3 million of Proposition 400 money for a total of \$106.7 million. The money has been used for right-of-way acquisition, environmental studies, design and construction. Please see attachments regarding Proposition 300 and 400 obligations for more information.
	Where can we see the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan?	A sample Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be made available at the September 25, 2008, SMCAT meeting. Due to the document size, it is not attached.
	In a letter from Eric Anderson, Transportation Director, dated 8-4-08, he wrote, "This year, however, we face the unusual situation of having nearly all of the federal funds already programmed through 2013." What impact does that have on the funding for the proposed South Mountain Freeway?	The project team does not believe that the statement in the MAG letter has any bearing to the funding for the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

Topic	SMCAT member/public question	ADOT response
Miscellaneous (continued)	When the SMCAT is asked for their input regarding the Action versus No-Action alternatives, how will that process be conducted? Will there be full disclosure by each SMCAT member or via secret ballot?	The SMCAT will determine the process for providing their input regarding the Action and No-Action alternatives. The process would be in the spirit of the open meeting law. A discussion of this process is scheduled for the October 23, 2008, SMCAT meeting.
	Who is the primary contact at ADOT for Proposition 203–Transportation and Infrastructure Moving Arizona’s Economy (TIME)? What percentage of that ballot initiative is ADOT paying?	For information regarding ADOT’s involvement in the TIME initiative, please contact ADOT Communication and Community Partnerships at 602.712.7355.
	If ADOT build this totally unnecessary freeway, some people will lose their homes. Some may lose their mental health. Some will lose their physical health. Some may lose their peace and quiet. Some will lose their views of the mountains and open land. We all will lose the current, natural beauty of the South Mountains! Take the freeway to the Westside of the Estrellas south and southeast to connect with the I-10 (way south of Pecos Road). Show us proof that you are explaining alternative routes! Update the cost of building this unnecessary freeway along Pecos Road. No build is the only solution to all the problems building this albatross would create.	The DEIS will provide the information that explains the comprehensive alternatives analysis process. The cost estimate will be updated for the September 25, 2008, SMCAT meeting.
	Why doesn't ADOT assume responsibility for errors such as the one on US 60 where dozens of drivers/passengers were stuck for five hours or more recently because the highway was flooded during a monsoon or rainfall? I wonder what such a delay would do to their time savings and cost. Why doesn't ADOT admit that all this enormous expense is a waste (planning and building the South Mountain Freeway that is)? Spend 10 percent of this much money and energy planning and building mass transit—and the Valley of the Sun would be all set!	This flooding was caused by an extraordinary amount of rainfall in a short duration of time; ADOT responded accordingly to fix the problems. The region needs all types of transportation options including freeways and transit. The <i>Regional Transportation Plan</i> includes funding for the next 20 years for a multimodal transportation system in Maricopa County.

Questions addressed from the August 28 meeting

Topic	SMCAT member/public question	ADOT response
Air quality	Various air quality studies have or are being performed, especially as it relates to schools and learning. The Sierra Club sued U.S. DOT over Interstate 95 in Las Vegas. There has been similar litigation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Why has an independent study not been done in this area like has been done in Nevada by the Desert Research Institute?	Discussions about air quality issues will occur closer to the release of the DEIS. Questions on this topic will be addressed at the public hearing and at the two SMCAT meetings that will have this topic as its focus.
Cultural resources	How were historic artifacts identified being in the path of the South Mountain Freeway (Loop 202)? Was any type of detection system used that would look at this type of mass located underground? This is essentially a device similar to a metal detector.	The historic (and prehistoric) artifacts were identified during the surveys through visual inspections of the ground surface. No subsurface detection devices were used.
	ADOT and HDR have identified one village site and five habitation sites. What would have been the population of these projected/estimated populations?	It is difficult to know exactly how many people lived at one site at any specific time. In general, habitation sites could have been on the order of 10s or 100s of people whereas villages were on the order of 100s or 1000s of people.
	When a past village or inhabited site (historical) is identified, how is it determined that mitigation is required? Who makes the decision if an archaeological dig will happen to study and capture and artifacts? Will any of the Native American local tribes have a say if a dig is required?	The sites are assessed by archaeologists to determine if they would be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If they are eligible, and FHWA/ADOT determine that they would be adversely impacted, then the sites would be mitigated through archaeological excavations. FHWA/ADOT will consult with Native American groups and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) throughout the process, which includes the identification of sites, determining if sites are eligible for the National Register, and in developing appropriate strategies for mitigation.
	You state that local Native American tribes were consulted concerning the archaeological finds. Does this mean that they are included in the decision making process of preserving the finds? If so, how does this decision-making process work?	Native American tribes are consulted throughout the decision-making process as part of Section 106 consultations per the National Historic Preservation Act. Through a combination of letters and meetings, FHWA and ADOT solicited input from Native American tribes on all aspects of the identification, evaluation and treatment of cultural resources as they pertain to the project. This consultation is an on-going process.
	Were most, if not all, archaeological finds discussed tonight simply located by viewing the surface of the projected path of the South Mountain Freeway (Loop 202)? If not, what other means were used to locate the artifacts?	Yes. The sites discussed were identified through visual inspections of the ground surface. A cultural resource survey, which includes visual inspection of the ground surface, also includes review of the literature and site files, so that the survey team is aware of what archaeological finds have been made in the past in the project vicinity. This can be particularly important in a built environment, where surface evidence of sites may have been obscured by modern development.

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Right-of-way	The original ADOT rights of way over South Mountain Park were grandfathered. But the original 1985 scope was much smaller. How has ADOT answered this change in scope and essential violation of the original right-of-way?	Provisions in the Phoenix Mountain Preserve Act clearly indicate voter approval is not applicable to a planned state route, if the state route was in the state highway system on August 15, 1990. The proposed South Mountain Freeway was in the state system prior to 1990 and it is thus exempt. Known legislative history of this statute does not mention a specific alignment or right-of-way or roadway width. These specifics were to be determined through the collaborative project development process. In addition, throughout the study process, engineering refinements have reduced the amount of park acreage from the original 40 acres to 32.5 acres that would currently be required.
	Please post in the Parking Lot Issues Memorandum the name of the ADOT person who handles the right-of-way acquisition.	The ADOT contact for right-of-way acquisition is Nan Wilcox. She can be reached by phone at 602.712.6126 or through e-mail at nwilcox@azdot.gov .
	The HDR speakers stated that 32.5 acres from South Mountain Park would be used to construct the proposed South Mountain Freeway. Does this include drainage, lighting, right-of-way fencing or anything else that is needed to construct the proposed highway? If it does not include what was just mentioned, how many actual acres will be taken from the park?	The 32.5 acres includes all of the area needed to construct the freeway (including those items listed and others).
	Who signs off on allowing ADOT to remove the acreage from South Mountain Park to build the proposed South Mountain Freeway (Loop 202)? Will this property be taken by state authorities or does the City of Phoenix have to release it?	The City of Phoenix, under provisions set forth in the Phoenix Mountain Preserve Act would not be able to sell park land to ADOT for the proposed freeway. Therefore, ADOT would undertake the condemnation process to obtain the land.
	On slide 40, it looks like the E1 Alternative has been shifted completely out of the Phoenix South Mountain Park/Preserve. In the past, we have been shown this alignment shifted more to east. The materials you are showing us don't seem to match.	The location of the freeway through the South Mountains and the Phoenix SMPP has remained generally unchanged since the original 1988 study. The graphic was not intended to show the detailed location of the freeway, but rather, show the proposed freeway's relation to other properties in the area. More detailed location information of the proposed freeway can be found on the project Web site: http://www.azdot.gov/Highways/Valley_Freeways/Loop_202/South_Mountain/maps.asp .

Section 4(f)	So what is considered a walk-on public use of a school? What if the school has the grounds locked but they are available for the public if they get permission to use the facility with advance notice?	<p>Not all public schools are afforded protection under Section 4(f). To be considered a Section 4(f) resource, outdoor school recreational areas must be publicly owned and must be available for walk-on activity by the public. Walk-on activity implies individuals do not have to make arrangements with school officials prior to use of the school's outdoor recreational facilities. School recreational facilities only serving school activities and functions are not subject to Section 4(f) protections.</p> <p>The Section 4(f) eligibility was determined based on correspondence with school and district officials and site visits.</p> <p>It should be noted that although none of the schools were identified as Section 4(f) resources, the main protection of that law—avoidance unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative—has been provided. No schools along the E1 Alternative (or the W55 Alternative) would be directly impacted.</p>
	On slide 35, I don't see Desert Vista High School listed [as a 4(f) property].	
	With regard to the public school recreational facilities, there are several schools adjacent to the proposed E1 Alignment that are not on the recreational facility map. Why? This refers to not only the Kyrene School District, but also the Tempe Union School District.	
Miscellaneous	How does a 200-foot superstructure become mitigated so as not to alter the mountain?	As presented at the February SMCAT meeting (Profile Options at the South Mountains' Ridges), tunnel and bridge options were evaluated as mitigation measures to avoid certain impacts to the South Mountains. Complete avoidance was not possible and associated impacts and costs were determined to not be prudent, so these options were eliminated from further study. The current preference for construction of the freeway is to excavate through the ridges of the South Mountains.
	Where is the City of Phoenix representative regarding the park and what is their position. Have they been invited to these meetings?	<p>The City of Phoenix is part of the project team and has been updated throughout the study process regarding park-related issues. Comments opposed to having the freeway going through the South Mountains have been received from the City of Phoenix Parks Board, the Phoenix Mountain Preservation Council and the Arizona State Horseman's Association.</p> <p>Coordination with these groups and others regarding mitigation measures would continue through the design and construction phases if freeway were to be built.</p>
	Will this highway cross the path of the Salt River? If it does, will the highway impede the flow of the Salt River, if it is allowed to flow again?	Yes, the proposed freeway alignment would cross the Salt River at approximately 63rd Avenue. A new bridge would be constructed across the river. The elevation of the bridge would be such that it would be high enough for a large amount of water to pass through (water associated with a major storm and normal river flow) unimpeded under the freeway. As required by Maricopa County Flood Control regulations, the bridge and its associated piers and substructure would be constructed in such a manner as to not impact the river's flow.

Questions to be answered in a future parking lot issues memorandum

Topic	SMCAT member/public question
Traffic projections/ economics	Where can I get the detailed projected traffic volume data (cut-line analysis) for the South Mountain Freeway? This would be the traffic volume on which the \$400 million per year in time savings at \$16.25 per hour is based. Please provide enough source reference for a Freedom of Information Act request. I think it would be interesting seeing some of that cumbersome data.