



## Good work on Loop 202, but it's not done yet

[Commentary by Sal DiCiccio](#)

2010-01-05 09:34:45



Momentum has swung strongly toward exploring an alternative to the Pecos Road South Mountain Loop 202 alignment on the Gila River Indian Community thanks to powerful letters of support from Gov. Jan Brewer, House Majority Leader John McComish and Congressman Harry Mitchell – plus hard, cooperative work by many players.

As you know, I've been a strong proponent of an alternative to the Pecos Road alignment. When I took office this year, I pledged to our community that I would work toward an Ahwatukee solution to the freeway situation, a solution that created a win-win for all parties, the state, taxpayers, our neighborhoods, preservation of South Mountain and for our neighbor to the south, the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC). I acknowledge that the city of Phoenix has no vote on the alignment, but that does not mean that we could not have a forceful voice on getting all parties to communicate, and to that end, my office has been working tirelessly to see if there could be a win-win for all.

I've maintained that another alignment would save taxpayers' money, preserve South Mountain, provide opportunities for GRIC and rescue neighborhoods and homes. We've since learned that perhaps \$200 million in construction/engineering costs also might be saved.

Win-win solutions are accomplished when all parties work together, which I'm happy to report is occurring. The best example was the Dec. 7 meeting at the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) attended by me, MAG, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), federal highway officials, GRIC, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), two congressional offices and others – the first time all stakeholders sat in the same room and talked things through like that. The result was a general agreement that GRIC would formally indicate its willingness to consider a proposal and that MAG and ADOT would pursue it. Brewer, in her letter to GRIC Gov. William Rhodes, pledged “the full engagement of the Arizona Department of Transportation” in working with the GRIC to develop a SM202 alignment there.

Other “never-quit” players have been working behind the scenes for the past nine months on this, including Chad Blostone and Mike Hinz of Ahwatukee Foothills, two local HOA board members and worker bees who have kept this alternative issue alive so it could reach this point. When very few people believed such an outcome possible, they doggedly worked at it, helped us uncover information, develop relationships and drive momentum.

A huge lesson for all of us, one that should ring much louder in these difficult times, is what innovation and results can come from working together. Look at all the different communities, levels of government, primary missions and cultures that share in this accomplishment. It included federal, state, city, MAG ... and HOAs and community ad hoc committees. It's the Gila River Indian Community, suburban Ahwatukee and the folks in downtown Phoenix. It's neighbors, engineers, elected officials, agency heads, community activists, Democrats and Republicans.

However, there are still those among us who are looking for failure and looking to derail all the hard work that so many of you have put into this solution. We still have a long way to go, and for our community to succeed and keep this momentum alive, we need your help.

Please sign onto [www.SM202.com](http://www.SM202.com) and leave your e-mail so we can update you as developments occur. Also, please feel free to forward any of this information to any other concerned parties. We look forward to your opinions and feedback.

Thank you all, again, for your effort.

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