

## **This Just In: Councilman wants alternative for freeway**

[By Doug Murphy Ahwatukee Foothills News](#)

2009-10-06 11:12:41

It may be too little too late, or it could be the perfect win-win-win, either way, Councilman Sal DiCiccio thinks that Arizona should make a good faith offer to the Gila River Indian Community to consider allowing the South Mountain Loop 202 on tribal land before construction begins along Pecos Road.

DiCiccio has formed a committee of local residents to lobby for a "concrete" proposal to GRIC for building the now scaled-back eight-lane freeway south of Pecos and around South Mountain instead of through it.

“At the end of the day, if the Gila’s say no, at least we’ll have offered them something concrete,” DiCiccio said.

He said the problem with Arizona and the tribe has been one of culture. Arizona thinks along the lines of acres needed for a freeway and dollars per acre.

But DiCiccio said that land is a precious commodity to the tribe and not something to sell or give away lightly.

“If land is an extension of their body, you need to give them back more than you take,” DiCiccio said.

His proposal, which is still in the infant stages, includes:

- Working to resolve the issue of heavy truck traffic on 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue that cuts through the Komatke community and has been a sore point with the Gila River Indian Community for years.
- Land swaps with the tribe, which could include Bureau of Land Management acreage in the Estrella Mountains on the west side of the reservation, in return for acreage for the proposed freeway, as well as other parcels the tribe needs.

“The Gila’s have been maligned, but nobody has made a good faith proposal,” said DiCiccio, who hopes to broker a deal that costs less than the current \$1.9 billion price tag, and ends up solving the needs of Ahwatukee Foothills residents as well as Gila River Indian Community members.

For more information, see the *Ahwatukee Foothills News* Oct. 9 or visit [www.ahwatukee.com](http://www.ahwatukee.com).