

New councilman DiCiccio wants people's input

[By Doug Murphy](#)

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Councilman Sal DiCiccio is quick to admit that he doesn't have all the answers, but he hopes you might.

On Monday night he asked the Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee to form separate committees to look at two pressing issues: the closure of the kitchen at Pecos Park Community Center and the suggestion that the South Mountain Loop 202 freeway might be replaced with a smaller, less expensive parkway.

"I'm not a big fan of the freeway, as it stands now," DiCiccio told the planning committee. But he also said the reality is that it is being supported by the city of Phoenix and others because the Laveen area needs a north-south travel route.

DiCiccio wants a committee made up of local residents to look at the parkway concept to see how it would impact the Ahwatukee Foothills area.

"I like the parkway concept, but I don't know what it means," he said.

The Arizona Department of Transportation has had the South Mountain Loop 202 Freeway on the design table for almost 25 years, but escalating costs and declining revenues put it on hold in 1995 and may again place the 10-lane freeway to carry 190,000 vehicles a day through a corner of South Mountain on ice.

A parkway concept was floated in the past few months as a possible alternative, carrying up to 90,000 vehicles a day with a smaller price tag.

But no decision by ADOT or the Maricopa Association of Governments, which oversees Valley transportation planning, has been made to formally switch plans from a freeway to a parkway.

See the Feb. 27 issue of the *Ahwatukee Foothills News* for more information on the parkway concept.

The kitchen in the senior center was closed as part of massive city-wide budget cuts. Seniors still receive hot meals shipped in from another city kitchen on the other side of South Mountain, but some say it's a waste to have a brand new kitchen with appliances less than two years old, sit idle.

DiCiccio wants a committee to look at creative ways to keep the kitchen open, including the idea of leasing the facility out to a private vendor.

The Village Planning Committee chairman, Doug Cole, said e-mails will go out to committee members about volunteering for one of the two committees.

Any members of the public interested in volunteering for the kitchen or freeway committees can contact DiCiccio's office at (602) 262-7491 or council.district.6@Phoenix.gov.