



Panel regroups after ADOT rejects advice

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A scaled-down South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team met Thursday for the first time since last spring when state highway officials rejected its west-side alignment recommendation.

The 18-member group met at the Arizona Department of Transportation offices in downtown Phoenix as part of an orientation designed to decide how often the new group will meet and what issues it will discuss.

The last time the citizens advisory group met was in April to recommend a west-side alignment for the proposed South Mountain Freeway. The 22-member group urged ADOT to connect the freeway to Loop 101.

Instead, ADOT picked 55th Avenue as its "preferred alignment."

The agency hasn't yet chosen the east-side South Mountain leg to complete Loop 202, designed to ring the Valley, nor has it decided whether to build the 22-mile, \$1.7 billion stretch.

ADOT has, however, identified Pecos Road as the most likely route through Ahwatukee Foothills. That route would mean the demolition of nearly 250 homes, twice as many if the freeway is built below grade.

Transportation planners estimate the proposed South Mountain Freeway would carry 189,000 vehicles per day by 2030.