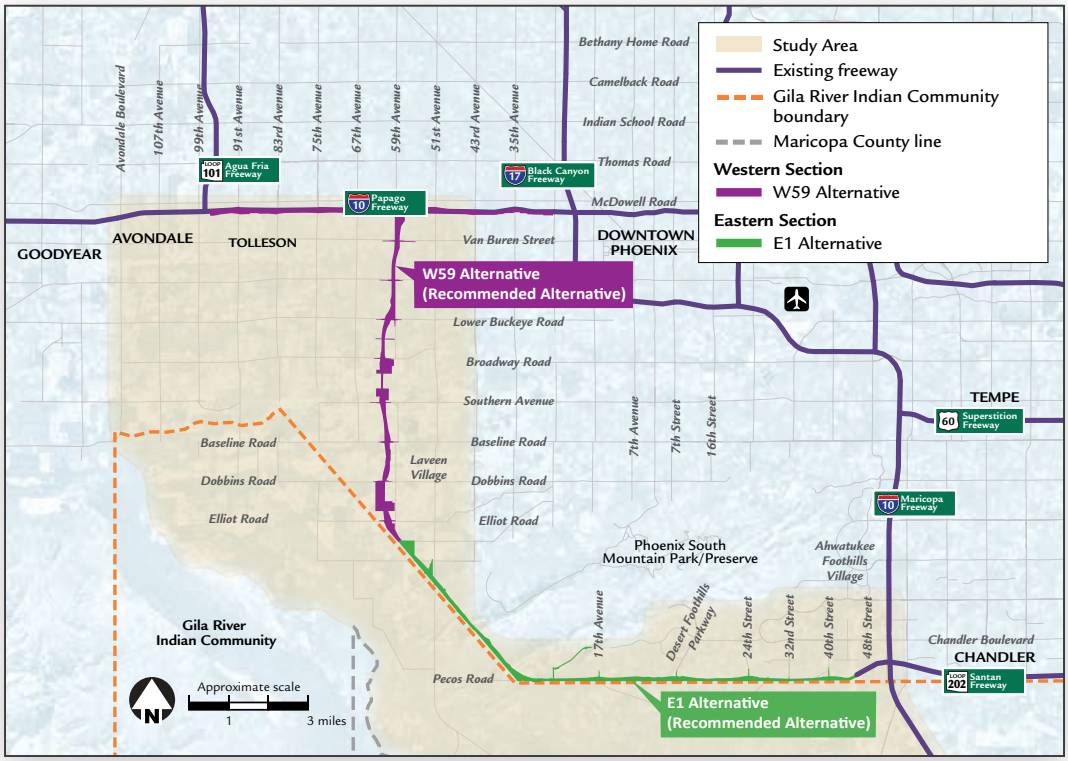
Study Update

LOOP 202
South Mountain
Freeway Study

Background

The proposed Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway has been a critical part of the Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) Regional Freeway Program since it was first included in funding approved by Maricopa County voters in 1985. The proposed freeway was also part of the *Regional Transportation Plan* funding passed by Maricopa County voters in 2004 through Proposition 400. The proposed freeway is a key component of the region's adopted multimodal transportation plan and the Regional Freeway and Highway System and is the last piece to complete the Loop 202 system.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Recommended Alternatives



What is the current status?

The Arizona Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration recently completed the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, or "Draft EIS," for the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway. During this 90-day comment period, ADOT and FHWA conducted a public outreach process that included an awareness campaign, one public hearing, six community forums, an online public hearing website, Citizens Advisory Team meetings, and presentations to stakeholder organizations. Over 3,000 individuals participated in this process and provided valuable input.

The Arizona Department of Transportation, FHWA and the study team are currently reviewing all comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period. During this period, over 8,000 comments were received from the public, stakeholders, and interested agencies on the Draft EIS. Regardless of how a comment was submitted, all public comments received on the Draft EIS will be considered, addressed, and answered in the next document.

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What are the next steps?

The next step in the process is to complete additional analysis in response to the comments received, followed by the publication of the Final EIS, currently anticipated to be available for public review in 2014. The Final EIS will include comments received during the Draft EIS comment period and responses to those comments. It will also reflect any changes to the project based on comments received on the Draft EIS.

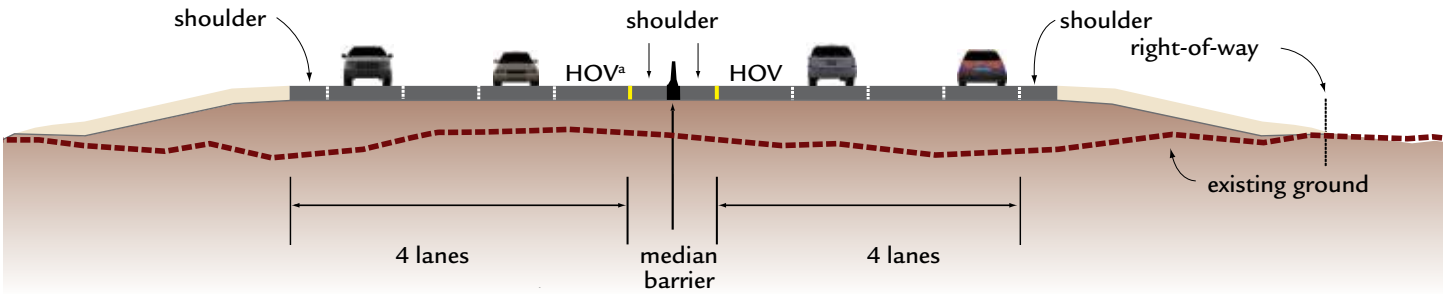
After the Final EIS is prepared, it will be available for a 60-day public review period. Any new substantive comments received that were not addressed in the Final EIS would be addressed in the Record of Decision, the final decision-making document prepared by FHWA.

Where would the Freeway be located?

The proposed freeway is broken up into two segments, an eastern section and a western section. The eastern section connects to I-10 adjacent to the current Loop 202 Santan Freeway, and the western section veers north to connect the freeway loop to I-10. For the eastern section, the proposed alignment follows Pecos Road. This alignment was first proposed in 1985 and affirmed in the 1988 Environmental Assessment. For the western section, the proposed freeway alignment is called the "W59 Alternative," which provides a north-south connection of the South Mountain to I-10 near 59th Avenue. A "no build" option also is being evaluated, as required by federal law.

When would the Freeway be built?

If the outcome of the study is a build alternative, then the timing of construction will depend upon the completion of final design, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation. A corridor implementation plan developed by ADOT will identify how to construct the overall project, including the length and sequence of construction segments. The current Regional Freeway and Highway Program identifies construction funding for the freeway beginning in fiscal year 2015.



The configuration of the freeway is anticipated to be eight lanes (three general-purpose lanes and one high occupancy vehicle lane in each direction).