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The Maricopa Association of Governments is moving forward with plans for the South Mountain Freeway amid continued opposition from people who live in the area of the highway intended to relieve traffic on Interstate 10 by providing a bypass of downtown Phoenix.

MAG was to vote Wednesday on an updated budget and plan for the Loop 202 extension, so it can proceed with an environmental impact statement.

Current plans call for the Loop 202 to run 22 miles on the south side of South Mountain, from I-10 in the southeast Valley, west along Pecos Road, then north along 59th Avenue to reconnect with I-10 in the west Valley.

MAG's Eric Anderson wants to get things moving.

"I think the overall point is that neighborhoods down there have really been held in limbo for a number of years now," said Anderson. "It's time to get the environmental impact statement finished and get on with it."

David Caplan, who lives near where Pecos Road turns from paving to gravel on the west side of Ahwatukee, wants the plans changed.

"We would get air pollution, we would get noise pollution," said Caplan, who wants the Loop 202 to go south of Pecos Road.

Caplan said his neighborhood will continue to fight the plans.

"I think it would be total outrage, and I think people would literally be standing on the road in front of the bulldozers, demanding that this outrage be halted."

Plans have been scaled back and the proposal up for discussion Wednesday calls for the Loop 202 extension to be eight lanes wide - four in each direction including one HOV lane.

The South Mountain Freeway is part of the freeway system for which voters approved funding in 1985. The South Mountain has been delayed because of a lack of money and Anderson said money still is tight.

"We're about \$6 billion short because of higher construction costs, as well as lower revenues."

Anderson hopes the road can be made more acceptable to Ahwatukee homeowners.

"We're trying to keep it in a lot of the existing right-of-way that ADOT (Arizona Department of Transportation) already owns along Pecos Road to try to avoid some of the impacts on neighborhoods," Anderson said.

Caplan is not convinced. He said truckers have another route to bypass Phoenix.

"They could take Riggs Road to get around and that could be expanded to become the 202 as well," he said.

Plans for the South Mountain still require state and federal approval. Work on the South Mountain is not expected to begin until 2013.

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