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## Developers offer to pay \$40M to fund new interchange at I-10 and Tangerine

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Six landowners with property near Tangerine Road and Interstate 10 will pay around \$40 million to design and build a new freeway interchange, moving Tangerine a half-mile northwest of its current location to help open up the area for development.

"This is going to be a really major commercial area for Southern Arizona," said David Mehl, whose Cottonwood Properties owns 110 acres on the southwest side of the existing Tangerine/I-10 interchange.

It would be the first developer-funded highway project to occur in Pima County since the Arizona Department of Transportation began allowing such projects in the mid-1990s.

Marana officials, as well as the owners of more than 1,500 acres in the area, see the I-10/Tangerine area as a significant regional corridor that could become a top shopping destination.

Projects proposed for the area include at least one large shopping center, an auto mall and other commercial developments.

"It's the most significant commercial corner until you get to Phoenix," Town Manager Mike Reuwsaat said. "This will eventually bring all the Avra Valley traffic, as well as the Oro Valley traffic, through the area."

Once the area gets built out it will likely create an economic boom for all parties involved, but there is no room on ADOT's long-range project list for improvements to the interchange.

So rather than wait for the state to find time — and money — to upgrade its Tangerine interchange, local property owners have spent the past year coming up with their own plan. That plan was approved last week by the Marana Town Council.

The most significant part of the plan calls for a new freeway interchange to be built 2,575 feet northwest of where Tangerine currently connects with I-10.

What is now Tangerine Road will continue to cross under I-10 at its current location, but the on- and off-ramps will be removed. The new interchange will be fed by a loop road that will branch off to the north from Tangerine, known as Tangerine Farms Road west of I-10.

Another pair of branch-off roads will extend south from Tangerine/Tangerine Farms, linking up with the I-10 frontage road halfway between Tangerine and the I-10/Avra Valley Road interchange.

The final version of the plan was submitted less than 12 hours before the council meeting, the last of 34 versions conceived through a collective endeavor between developers and Marana and ADOT officials.

The first developer-funded highway projects occurred north of Phoenix in the mid-1990s, when builders of the Anthem master-planned community spent more than \$30 million to design and

construct two interchanges along Interstate 17, said Greg Gentsch, an engineer for ADOT's Tucson district.

"It's a new, up-and-coming thing, but it's starting to become more common," he said. "There's so much growth in this state it's the only fair way to deal with it."

In another developer-funded project, improvements to Arizona 287 as it crosses I-10 in Casa Grande, are being paid for and built by Westcor, which is developing a shopping center there.

In Pima County, no developer-funded projects have happened yet, but Gentsch said several have been proposed, including a freeway interchange two miles south of the Pima/Pinal county line that would link I-10 with the 1,780-acre Villages of Tortolita development planned for northeast Marana.

The overhaul of the I-10/Tangerine interchange was necessary to open up much of the land around the area for development, owners say.

"This is property that will probably look better developed than vacant," said Terry Klipp, president of Terramar Properties, which owns 16 acres south of Tangerine and east of I-10.

No single plan was completely favored by every interested party, but the final version proved to be the most beneficial for all, owners say.

"I don't think there's a single property owner that got everything they wanted," said Mitch Stallard of Westcor, which has plans for a major retail center as well as an autoplex on 295 acres on the northwest side of the interchange. "I think what emerged was what was in the best interest for Marana ... not for an individual property owner."

No timetable has been set for the project. Gentsch said the landowners must pay for its design, then pay ADOT to review the plans, before construction can begin.

### **Did you know ...**

Tangerine Road was created in 1936 when the Pima County Board of Supervisors approved a petition asking for 69 feet of right-of-way between Camino de Mañana and the Oracle Highway. A petition by the Tortolita Citrus Association in 1940 was approved by supervisors to grade the road. In 1956, supervisors approved widening the road to 100 feet and extending it from the Oracle Highway to the Casa Grande Highway, which is now Interstate 10.

Source: Pima County Department of Transportation

### **Who owns what?**

Six landowners who own property around the I-10/Tangerine Road freeway interchange have agreed to put up their own money to fund a new interchange and a series of loops roads to better open up the land for development.

Landowner Area location # acres

Bourn Partners Northeast of I-10/Tangerine 167

Cottonwood Properties Southwest of I-10/Tangerine 110

John Kai Southeast of I-10/Tangerine about 600

MSP Companies Northeast of I-10/Tangerine 358

Terramar Properties Southeast of I-10/Tangerine 16

Westcor Northwest of I-10/Tangerine 295