

## Final leg of Red Mtn. Freeway to open in fall

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At \$39 million a mile, it will make life better for Mesa residents like Brandy Butler, Ryan Nowicki and Joe Strand.

"It makes everything accessible," Strand said of opening the Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway's final five-mile leg this fall.

The \$195 million concrete ribbon is being completed from a point near the freeway's Power Road exit, which is south of Thomas Road, to [University Drive](#).

And though it will finish the freeway's irregularly shaped circuit linking central Phoenix with the East Valley, the new section also is at the doorstep of two sprawling, master-planned communities, dozens of other neighborhoods, high-volume business centers and a city library.

Business owners and residents in the area say they are looking forward to a quicker link with much of the Valley while relieving major streets of a growing traffic burden.

"It's a straight shot to work for me and my husband," said Butler, after buying a cup of coffee to go at a Starbucks near McDowell and Power roads. "It will make our lives so much easier when it goes all the way through."

Butler tends bar within walking distance of the future freeway interchange at McDowell and her husband, a pharmacist, works at a drugstore a few blocks away.

Nowicki, an 18-year-old college student and employee of his father's three restaurants, was born years after voters approved funding for the freeway in 1985, and he can't wait for its completion.

"I live in Las Sendas (one of the master-planned communities)," he said while tending to duties at D'Vine Wine Bar & Bistro north of McDowell and Power. "I can pop on the freeway from here and it goes near my father's other restaurants in Chandler."

For Strand, the freeway will open more opportunities for his sales office on Main Street east of Power.

"Accessibility drives my business," said the owner of Strand Manufactured Homes. "And people in places like Apache Junction will have better accessibility to my business."