

# County to begin planning Signal Butte project

END OF THE LINE? Signal Butte Road dead ends south of Warner Road in Queen Creek. March 10, 2009.

*Thomas Boggan, Tribune*

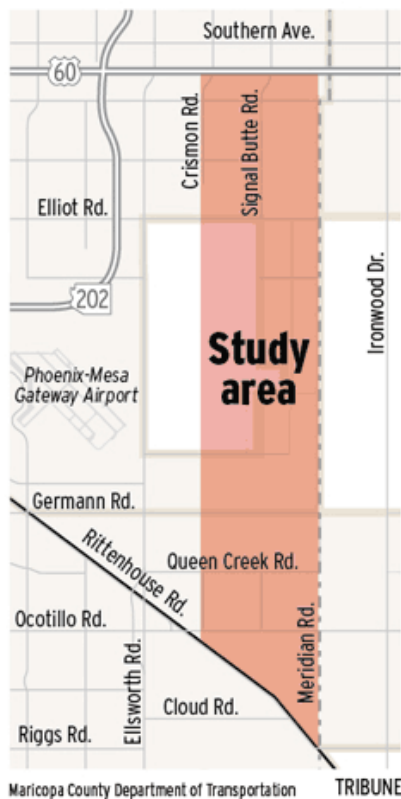
To keep up with expected growth in Queen Creek and southeast Mesa, county transportation officials say it's time to set the wheels in motion in making the segmented Signal Butte Road a continuous stretch between U.S. 60 and Rittenhouse Road.



The Maricopa County Department of Transportation on Thursday will hold its first community meeting to receive public input on possible alignments, widths and other features that will be planned for the road.

## Signal Butte improvements

The Maricopa County Department of Transportation is studying routes to build Signal Butte Road continuously between the U.S. 60 and Rittenhouse Road.



Signal Butte is currently piecemeal between the freeway and Rittenhouse. But with an existing exit off U.S. 60, another exit planned for the future Williams Gateway Freeway and development expected along the corridor, Signal Butte is expected to grow in importance as a regional corridor between Mesa and Queen Creek.

The meeting will allow residents to comment about their travel needs, existing traffic concerns, preferred alignments for the road and related information, said Roberta Crowe, MCDOT spokeswoman.

The government agency will couple that information with forecasts it will develop on anticipated traffic demand in 2030, Crowe said.

"Part of the scope of the project is to identify future need," Crowe said. "It's because development is already taking place or absolutely imminent."

Mesa is anticipating that development will start closer to the freeway and head to the south. The first big project, developer DMB Associates' Gaylord resort, is expected to start in 2013, said Mike James, Mesa's deputy transportation director.

Development will likely continue moving south around the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and the planned Williams Gateway Freeway, he said.

"Long term, (Signal Butte is) a key corridor for Mesa," James said.

Queen Creek has already started thinking about Signal Butte, said Tom Condit, community development director. A proposal to change the town's general plan to connect Meridian Road with Signal Butte is going to the Planning and Zoning Commission today.

The corridor will become increasingly important whether that plan comes to fruition or a different route for Signal Butte is chosen, Condit said.

"Any of those is going to be an improvement and (give drivers) more ability to get in the community and out of the community," Condit said.

Other than one segment in Mesa that will be funded with Proposition 400, passed by Maricopa County voters earlier this decade, funding for the road will depend on development along the corridor, Crowe said.

After the initial meeting Thursday, the public will have a chance to comment on the route alternatives MCDOT develops in May and then take a look at final recommendations in July, Crowe said.

However, Crowe recommended that interested residents comment now, in the earliest phase of the project.

"The opportunities for public input are greater than they will ever be," Crowe said. "This is the ground floor for input into the ultimate roadway's configuration and characteristics."

### **Signal Butte Road Corridor Improvement Study Open House**

**When:** 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday

**Where:** Founder's Hall, 22350 S. Ellsworth Road, Queen Creek

**More information:** Denise Lacey, (602) 506-6172 or [deniselacey@mail.maricopa.gov](mailto:deniselacey@mail.maricopa.gov), or Roberta Crowe, (602) 506-8003