

EAST VALLEY Tribune.COM

January 15, 2010

State DOT needs 1 piece of land for Route 802

By Andre Bowser
Tribune



A sign along Ellsworth Road shows where the proposed Williams Gateway Freeway would cross in Mesa. The Legislature has taken \$20 million, which had been appropriated for designing the planned state Route 802 from Mesa to Florence Junction in Pinal County, as part of a solution to cover a \$1.6 billion budget gap this fiscal year.

Tribune

The future path of the western portion of state Route 802, planned to snake past Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and a variety of developments in the near and distant future, has only one hurdle in its path.

The Arizona Department of Transportation reported that negotiations with an East Valley developer are moving forward on a section of land near Ellsworth and Ray roads, which sits in the path of the proposed state route.

The developer, Paragon Properties and its affiliate Ellsray, own 90 acres in the area.

"We only have one offer on the table right now, and that's to Paragon," said Douglas, who noted that the state began official negotiations with the developer in December. "We expect to get more into the negotiations process during the next several months."

Ryan Eller, senior vice president of finance and acquisition for Paragon, said: "I wish we were a little further down the road, but we are in the process of reviewing" ADOT's proposal. The deal could be for all or part of the land, Eller said.

Neither Eller nor Douglas disclosed details of the offer.

The state route receives funding under Proposition 400, the countywide, half-cent sales tax that went into effect in 2006.

Douglas said the state expected to complete its engineering and environmental assessments for the portion of the route between Loop 202 and Ellsworth Road in 2010. Construction for that portion was not expected until 2016. Construction of the easternmost portion of the route near Ironwood Road could extend well beyond 2020, she said.

East Valley civic and community leaders have characterized the state route, and the confluence of traffic it will drive into east Mesa, as life's blood for the region.

The freeway interchanges - planned for major north and south arteries such as Ellsworth Road and Signal Butte Road - are desirable spots for future developments.

The current, westernmost path dips south of the Loop 202 at a 45-degree angle and hugs the future site of a proposed terminal expansion at the growing Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport near Ellsworth Road. Future plans for the new terminal would extend out at least a decade, airport officials have reported.

Paul Gilbert, the zoning attorney and spokesman for Pacific Proving Grounds, said Mesa has already approved plans for his client to build high rises, regional shopping and other projects on their land, which is seated comfortably amid multiple planned interchanges along the proposed route.


Gilbert said although his client is sitting pretty, they are in no rush to break ground.

"We have no immediate plans for development on the specific proving grounds property," Gilbert said. "However, the 802 is an integral part of our planning and we think that the route is ideal for our property and for the city of Mesa."

Gilbert said a big part of the plan was aligning future developments not only with the future freeway's traffic flow, but with the future airport terminal, too.

"We're planning our property so that we have a direct shot right into that terminal," he said.



 2010 Freedom Communications / Arizona. Permission granted for up to 5 copies. All rights reserved. You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing http://license.icopyright.net/3.7220?icx_id=149567 into any web browser. Freedom Communications / Arizona and East Valley Tribune logos are registered trademarks of Freedom Communications / Arizona . The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.