

An Important Message from Dallas Hammit, Deputy Director for Transportation

ADOT planning potential I-17 improvements between Anthem and Sunset Point

I regularly use these monthly Driving Safety Home messages to share reminders about how we all can make safe driving a priority, but from time to time, I also like to highlight some of the innovative actions ADOT is taking as an agency to improve the transportation system.

This month, I want to talk about what's in the plans for the section of Interstate 17 that stretches from Anthem to Sunset Point.

As you may already know, we've been studying the corridor for a number of years and recently held our first public meeting to discuss the potential improvements.

With the help of funds from the Maricopa Association of Governments, we're planning to add new lanes in areas between Anthem and Black Canyon City. The projects are currently scheduled for construction in the years 2021-22.

We're also looking at adding "flex lanes" between Black Canyon City and Sunset Point. These two flex lanes would be built parallel to existing I-17 southbound lanes — they'll be separated from the roadway by a concrete barrier.

Once constructed, we'd be able to open the flex lanes to either northbound or southbound traffic depending on peak traffic direction. Access to the flex lanes would be controlled by a gate.

This gives us a solution that we believe will greatly relieve congestion and would allow us to offer drivers an alternative route if there's a crash or closure on I-17. Right now, if there's a closure, motorists have to wait on the freeway, which can lead to other problems, including the potential for secondary crashes and very real impacts to the motorists who are stuck on the freeway.

For now, we're looking at ways to bring services (water and food) to waiting motorists when there's an extended closure. We've also been more focused on Traffic Incident Management training in recent years (that helps us to clear crashes quicker) and we've started staging people and equipment at strategic locations during high-traffic holidays. By being proactive, we can respond to incidents faster.

As we move forward, I encourage you to learn more about the plans, and I hope you'll share the information with your friends and family who regularly travel I-17. You can find details, including the link to a video simulation showing how the flex lanes will work, on ADOT's website.

