

**Interstate 8 and Interstate 10
Hidden Valley Transportation Framework Study**

Chapter I

Overview

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Prepared for



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Table of Contents

I.1	Background and Purpose	I-1
I.2	Objectives of the Study	I-1
I.3	Study Oversight and Review	I-2

List of Tables

Table I.1	Summary of Hidden Valley Study Area Socioeconomic Projections	I-1
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1.1 Background and Purpose

The Interstate 8 and Interstate 10 Hidden Valley Transportation Framework Study is the second of the long-range planning studies that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) will conduct in Maricopa County and adjacent counties. The purpose of these studies is to initiate the transportation planning process in areas that are expected to experience intense growth in population and employment over the next 30 to 50 years. MAG and its partners are beginning broad-brush planning in advance of the growth that will transform much of central Arizona from open desert to new communities.

The Hidden Valley Transportation Framework Study covers more than 2,000 square miles in Maricopa and Pinal counties—an area larger than the state of Delaware. Its approximate boundaries are Overfield Road (just east of I-10) on the east, 459th Avenue (seventeen miles east of the Maricopa County line) on the west, the Gila River on the north, and Interstate 8 on the south. The Hidden Valley region contains many specially designated or protected lands that constrain development, including several federal wilderness areas, the Sonoran Desert National Monument, and part or all of two sovereign American Indian communities: the Ak-Chin Indian Community and the Gila River Indian Community. Outside these lands, however, a great deal of developable territory exists on both private land and holdings of the Arizona State Land Department. The developable land, which includes numerous existing entitlements for master-planned communities and other residential and commercial centers, exists in the cities of Avondale, Casa Grande, Goodyear, Eloy and Maricopa; the towns of Buckeye and Gila Bend; and unincorporated Maricopa and Pinal counties

Table 1.1 summarizes the magnitude of expected growth, from 2005 to 2030 and to “Buildout,” which will occur at various times in different communities, but most likely after 2050. Buildout represents the limits of future land development

Table 1.1 Summary of Hidden Valley Study Area Socioeconomic Projections

Scenario (Year)	Population	Employment
2005	90,000	49,000
2030	448,000	224,000
Buildout (post-2050)	2,469,000	1,096,000

Sources: MAG Geographic Information Systems, 2007; Arizona Land Resource Information System, 2006

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The MAG Hidden Valley Transportation Framework Study is intended to meet the following objectives:

- To lay out a conceptual network of new high-capacity transportation corridors for freeways, parkways, arterials, and public transit throughout the study area.
- To identify potential system and traffic interchange locations on I-8, I-10 and newly proposed freeways (or other access-controlled facilities).
- To establish access management strategies for high-capacity corridors to ensure efficient and safe operation of roadways and transit.
- To prepare a comprehensive set of maps illustrating characteristics of the study area’s natural and man-made environment.
- To integrate recommendations with results of the recently completed MAG Interstate 10/Hassayampa Valley Framework Study, which covered over 1,400 square miles north of the western Hidden Valley study area.
- To establish logical phasing of major transportation improvements to the year 2050.
- To specify future transportation corridors in which right-of-way should be preserved now.
- To investigate alternative funding strategies to pay for the proposed transportation concepts.

I.3 Study Oversight and Review

Two groups of agency stakeholders provided guidance and oversight throughout the study. The **Funding Partners** represented the following agencies, besides MAG, that provided financial support for the study:

- Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)
- Town of Buckeye
- City of Goodyear
- City of Maricopa
- Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)
- Pinal County Department of Public Works

Additional **Contributing Partners** that frequently reviewed proposed transportation alternatives and variations were:

- City of Casa Grande
- Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG)

The **Study Review Team** (SRT) was a larger group that acted as a sounding board and forum for discussion of progress at key milestones. The SRT provided valuable advice and information from a wide range of agencies and jurisdictions. The SRT included the following members as well as the Funding Partners and Contributing Partners:

- Ak-Chin Indian Community
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Arizona State Land Department
- City of Avondale
- City of Eloy
- Federal Highway Administration
- Flood Control District of Maricopa County
- Town of Gila Bend
- Gila River Indian Community
- U.S. Air Force (Luke Air Force Base and Goldwater Range)
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management

The Funding Partners generally met at least every other month through most of the study. Together with the Contributing Partners, they made the major decisions and provided continuous direction to the MAG study team. The SRT met as needed, but typically every two to three months.