

Interstate 10 – Hassayampa Valley Roadway Framework Study

Chapter 1

Overview

September 2007

Prepared for



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1.1 Background and Purpose

The Interstate 10-Hassayampa Valley Roadway Framework Study is the first of several long-range planning studies that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) will conduct in developing areas of Maricopa County—and in some cases, 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 growth that will transform much of central Arizona from open desert to new communities. Figure 1-1 shows how the Roadway Framework Studies are intended to fit into the larger regional transportation planning process.

This study covers approximately 1,400 square miles in Maricopa County, bounded generally by State Route (SR) 303L on the east, the 459th Avenue section line on the west, the SR-74 alignment on the north, and the Gila River on the south. Several topographical features act as barriers to travel, especially the White Tank Mountains in the eastern portion of the study area. West of this mountain range, however, a great deal of developable land exists. Over 100 entitlements have been granted for master-planned communities and other residential and commercial developments, mostly in the Town of Buckeye, City of Surprise and unincorporated Maricopa County. Table 1.1 summarizes the magnitude of anticipated growth, from 2005 to 2030 (the latest year for which MAG has approved traffic forecasts) and to Buildout (perhaps 50 or more years in the future). At Buildout, Buckeye and Surprise expect to be among the five largest cities in Arizona..

Table 1.1 Summary of Hassayampa Valley Study Area Socioeconomic Projections

Scenario (Year)	Dwelling Units	Population	Employment (jobs)
2005	55,000	131,000	57,000
2030	394,000	936,000	388,000
Buildout Assumptions	1,094,000	2,778,000	1,047,000

Source: MAG, 2007. "Buildout" refers to an unspecified future date when development in the study area will have reached its hypothetical maximum. MAG does not forecast or model Buildout conditions, but uses reasonable assumptions based on information provided by its member jurisdictions.

Much of the impetus for this one-year study arose from the need to preserve Interstate 10—currently the only freeway serving the area—as a vital corridor for moving people and goods across the United States, as well as between metropolitan Phoenix and the ports of southern California. Both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) are concerned that, without an adequate network of high-capacity roadways serving the study area, I-10 will eventually become too congested to provide for efficient interstate commerce and travel.. To address these concerns, FHWA will no longer approve a distance of less than two miles between consecutive traffic interchanges (TIs) on the Interstate system.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To lay out a conceptual network of north-south and east-west roadways, varying in functional classification, that will provide access throughout the study area and preserve I-10 as an interstate travel and freight corridor;
- To identify potential traffic interchange locations on I-10 and proposed high-capacity roadways;
- To develop priorities for the next steps leading to ultimate construction of the proposed roadway network, regional connections and future I-10 interchanges;
- To study opportunities for alternative transportation modes;
- To evaluate funding options, and assess the capacity of existing and potential sources of funding; and
- To specify future corridors in which right-of-way should be preserved now.

I.3 Study Oversight and Review

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

- ADOT
- City of Goodyear
- City of Surprise
- Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)
- Town of Buckeye

The Funding Partners met approximately monthly to discuss progress, review interim products and help MAG make decisions about the course of the study.

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 met six times and provided valuable perspectives from a wide range of agencies and jurisdictions:

- ADOT (including several units other than those represented at Funding Partners' meetings)
- Arizona State Land Department
- City of Glendale
- City of Goodyear
- City of Surprise
- Federal Highway Administration
- Flood Control District of Maricopa County
- Luke Air Force Base
- MCDOT
- Town of Buckeye
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management

I.4 Stakeholder Outreach Activities and Participation Opportunities

Community outreach was a vital part of this study, and consumed a large share of the resources devoted to the project. MAG developed the conceptual high-capacity roadway framework through extensive interaction with stakeholders. Over a period of approximately 14 months, MAG and its consultants (collectively, the study team) conducted more than 130 meetings with various stakeholders either one-on-one or in groups, including agency representatives, property owners, developers, homebuilders, community organizations and others. As the process unfolded and a conceptual roadway framework was defined, the study team met with some stakeholders more than once. Appendix A contains a list of the stakeholder meetings in chronological order.

MAG's community outreach consultant developed a database of interested individuals and expanded it throughout the project. This database was used to generate a list of recipients for event invitations. The most important events were a series of four community/development forums held in May 2006, July 2006, February 2007, and July 2007. These forums, held in or near the study area, typically attracted an attendance of over 100 people. Their purpose was to present progress on the study, to answer questions and to obtain input. At the early forums, the input from stakeholders focused on general issues, concerns, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. One of the earlier forums divided participants into small groups to sketch out their ideas for future transportation corridors. The third forum, which presented the alternative transportation networks and their evaluation, was followed by a community open house consisting of a PowerPoint presentation and open discussion. The recommended high-capacity roadway network and implementation program were presented at the last forum in Buckeye for public review and final comment.

Appendix B documents comments received during the study from Funding Partners, the Study Review Team and members of the community. These comments were received orally, through written and electronic correspondence, and on comment cards distributed at the forums.

A coordination meeting with environmental resource agencies was held midway through the study, in late January 2007. The following agencies were invited:

- ADOT Environmental Planning Group
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- Arizona Department of Water Resources
- Arizona Game & Fish Department
- Arizona State Historic Preservation Office
- Arizona State Land Department
- Flood Control District of Maricopa County
- MCDOT Environmental Planning
- Maricopa County Parks
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Elected officials of affected jurisdictions, especially the Funding Partners, were briefed at important junctures. Public information media included a project newsletter and a frequently updated page on the MAG website.