

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

**Draft Working Paper No. 2**

**Public Involvement Plan**

**Revised August 2007**

Prepared for



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## **1.0 STUDY OVERVIEW**

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is sponsoring, with its funding partners, a transportation study called *Interstates 8 and 10 Hidden Valley Roadway Framework Study* (the “Hidden Valley study”) for the Southwest Maricopa/Western Pinal County, Arizona region. The study is bounded by the Gila River/northern boundary of the Gila River Indian Community to the north, Interstate 8 to the south, Overfield Road to the east, and 459<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west. The study area includes all or part of the City of Avondale, the City of Goodyear, the Town of Buckeye, the Town of Gila Bend, the City of Maricopa, the City of Casa Grande, the City of Eloy, the Gila River Indian Community, the Ak-Chin Indian Community, the Tohono O’odham Nation, and unincorporated portions of Maricopa and Pinal counties. The study will develop a transportation framework for the study area that will ultimately be implemented cooperatively by multiple jurisdictions.

## **2.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to outline the steps that the consulting team and MAG will take in order to involve project stakeholders and the community in the development of the Hidden Valley study. The PIP establishes strategies that address community needs and presents a high-quality program that will identify, educate, inform, and engage the stakeholders throughout the process.

Ensuring that a wide range of public and stakeholder involvement opportunities exists on all MAG transportation studies is very important. MAG is dedicated to taking a proactive approach in soliciting citizen and stakeholder comments early and often.

The PIP explains the steps that MAG and its consultants (the study team) will take to ensure citizen and stakeholder involvement throughout the study. The fundamental principle that provides the underlying foundation for the PIP is to ensure a “we’re all in this together” atmosphere that will promote understanding and useful input. Stakeholders, landowners, and residents must sense that their involvement is genuinely desired and that the time they spend is worthwhile. This is particularly important for attracting very diverse groups and those that may be skeptical or timid about participating. The PIP will guide the outreach process to meet the study objectives.

At the completion of the study, the study team will prepare a PIP Summary Report that compiles all input received throughout the planning process.

## **3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. MAG STAFF**

The MAG Project Manager will serve as the key contact person for the Hidden Valley study process. He will be responsible for coordinating all activities and ensuring that the project remains on schedule. Additionally, MAG public outreach staff will provide guidance and review related to the study’s public outreach and communication efforts.

### **B. CONSULTING TEAM**

The consultant team led by DMJM Harris is responsible for completing the scope of work and maintaining the schedule for completion of the study. In relation to the public and stakeholder involvement process, the consultant team will work with the MAG Project Manager to identify key stakeholders and implement the PIP.

The consultant team will be responsible for maintaining a project database; organizing, conducting and documenting stakeholder interviews; preparing for and implementing study forums and workshops; and (with the MAG Project Manager) making presentations on the project. Presentations will involve appropriate audio-visual techniques such as PowerPoint. The goal of the PIP and of the study is to reach consensus on a

preferred roadway framework with a functional hierarchy of facilities that will be approved by the MAG Regional Council.

### **C. FUNDING PARTNERS**

The study's funding partners (financial contributors) are MAG, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Maricopa County, Pinal County, the Town of Buckeye, the City of Goodyear, and the City of Maricopa. The study is being conducted in cooperation with the Central Arizona Association of Governments and ADOT as well as the cities, Indian communities, and counties within the study area. Coordination and communication with all of these agencies are critical to the successful completion of the study. The MAG/consultant team will coordinate with state, regional, and local funding partners throughout the process.

By coordinating with the various agencies, the team will be able to:

- ✓ Obtain background information and project data;
- ✓ Identify potential stakeholders and their perspectives;
- ✓ Develop an understanding of agency goals with respect to the study, and;
- ✓ Receive continuous feedback on the project approach, process, and products.

The Funding Partners will meet at least every other month throughout the study, or more frequently as needed. Approximately eight meetings are planned so far. The Funding Partners will review and comment on all draft products, and will provide guidance on public involvement activities throughout the process.

### **D. STUDY REVIEW TEAM**

The Study Review Team (SRT) will provide periodic review and comment. The SRT is composed of key agency stakeholders with the expertise to assist in the development of the study. The SRT will meet with the consulting team and staff throughout the process to provide feedback and direction. Meetings will be held throughout the study according to need.

## **4.0 INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES**

This section of the PIP presents the outreach techniques that will be used during the Hidden Valley study. These techniques will complement the team structure described above. The input techniques are intended to support the technical work program attached to Working Paper No. 1 as Appendix B.

The outreach process includes the following activities:

- Development Forums (2)
- Key Stakeholder Interviews (2 rounds)
- Focus Groups (2 rounds of 3)
- Community Workshops (2—each held at 3 locations for a total of 6)
- Elected Official Briefings (2 rounds)

### **A. DEVELOPMENT FORUMS**

The team will organize and conduct two development forums. The objective of the first development forum is to understand issues, concerns, opportunities, and current/proposed development projects within the planning area. A second forum will be conducted to receive feedback related to the preliminary draft transportation framework. Working with MAG staff, the team will develop the process to efficiently obtain input at each forum, prepare agendas, invite participants, prepare meeting materials, handle all meeting arrangements, facilitate the forum, and document the results. Each forum will be scheduled for approximately two to three hours, allowing ample time for a concise presentation followed by opportunities to express ideas, comments and criticism.

## **B. KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

To understand issues, development trends and opinions about the future, the team will conduct two rounds of key stakeholder interviews. These interviews will provide important background information for the team as the study begins and progresses. An interview guide will be developed and a list of potential interviewees identified with assistance from the MAG Project Manager. Team members will conduct the interviews and develop a summary report. These confidential interviews will identify common themes and divergent viewpoints throughout the study area. Notes of each interview will be prepared for internal team use only.

***First Round of Interviews:*** Held early in the process to identify issues, concerns, and development plans related to the study.

***Second Round of Interviews:*** Held midway in the process to discuss the alternative transportation frameworks under consideration.

## **C. FOCUS GROUPS**

Two rounds of three focus groups will be conducted. Their purpose is to obtain expert input on topics of particular importance. The focus groups will discuss:

Environmental Interests  
Commercial Transportation  
Intergovernmental Coordination

Each focus group will bring together a group of experts who can offer specialized input on key study elements. The groups will provide a tremendous opportunity to uncover opportunities and constraints affecting the framework of future roadways. Directed participation will be sought through personal invitations requesting attendance. Focus groups will be structured and led by team members who have extensive experience therewith.

Focus Group Round #1 – Buildout Base Network  
Focus Group Round #2 – Draft Network Recommendations

## **D. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS**

Two community workshops will be held during the process to solicit broad community input on various issues related to the Hidden Valley study. The consultant team, working closely with MAG staff, the Funding Partners and the SRT, will prepare and conduct the two community workshops to communicate with and educate the public on various aspects of the study. The objectives are to inform the public and stakeholders, discuss issues, obtain input on impacts of network alternatives and proposed projects, and solicit additional ideas. Each workshop will be held at three locations throughout the study area.

Interested stakeholders, developers, landowners, agencies, and citizens will be invited to participate in the community workshops. The consultant team will prepare workshop materials, handouts, questionnaires, and presentation materials. All input received will be documented.

Workshop #1: Review Existing Conditions and Identify Issues  
Workshop #2: Input on the Network Alternatives

## **E. BRIEFINGS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS**

The MAG/consultant team will make presentations to the governing bodies of local jurisdictions and Indian communities during the process. Two rounds of formal briefings are anticipated. Team members will also be available to brief individual officials upon request. In the first round, the study team will present the scope and objectives, solicit input on issues, and obtain feedback on a generalized framework. The purpose of the second

round will be to develop consensus on the preferred alternative and ultimately receive approval of the final study report.

## **5.0 COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES**

### **A. STAKEHOLDER/COMMUNITY DATABASE**

During the project initiation phase, all project stakeholders and interested individuals or agencies will be identified. The team has assumed that everyone will want to be involved; therefore, it is the goal of the PIP to be inclusive rather than exclusive. This will be particularly important because of the regional implications of this planning effort.

Key agencies as well as general stakeholders will be invited to participate in the process. As other concerned public agencies and stakeholders are identified during the planning process, they will be added to the database and contacted. The consultant team will be responsible for maintaining the stakeholder/community electronic database.

The following stakeholders will be contacted and kept informed:

- Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)\*
  - Maricopa and Pinal counties (Management, Transportation/Public Works\*, Planning & Development\*)
  - Flood Control District of Maricopa County\*
  - Indian communities\*
  - All cities and towns within the planning area\*
  - Federal Highway Administration\*
  - Arizona State Land Department\*
  - U.S. Bureau of Land Management\*
  - U.S. Department of Defense bases and installations\*
  - Utilities serving the study area or with facilities therein
  - Irrigation districts and other special districts in the area
  - Developers and landowners
  - Union Pacific Railroad
  - Economic development organizations
  - Valley Partnership, Pinal Partnership and other interested civic organizations
  - School districts and other educational institutions (e.g., Central Arizona College)
  - Other special districts
  - Homeowners Associations and other interested citizens groups
  - Other agencies and private organizations as appropriate
- \*Invited participants on Study Review Team*

### **B. NEWSLETTERS**

The consultant team will create a project newsletter devoted to the study. Four editions of the newsletter will be distributed at strategic points in the process. The purpose of the newsletters is to educate interested individuals and organizations about the study, present planning concepts and alternatives under consideration, and promote upcoming study events. The consultant team will be responsible for creating the newsletter, while MAG will distribute it to those listed in the study database. Newsletters will be posted on the MAG website and distributed electronically as much as possible.

Following are the topics for each newsletter:

- Newsletter #1: Existing and Expected Future Transportation Conditions
- Newsletter #2: Evaluation of Alternative Scenarios
- Newsletter #3: Draft Transportation Framework Recommendations
- Newsletter #4: Final Recommendations and Funding Opportunities

**C. MAG WEBSITE (continuously updated page)**

The consultant team will work with MAG staff to communicate information about the study process and interim products through a dedicated page on the MAG website. The study page will allow anyone to gather information about the study process, issues and results. The information will be interactive, allowing visitors to ask questions and provide comments, in addition to receiving information on upcoming meeting dates and the status of the study. MAG has established a special e-mail address ([hiddenvalley@mag.maricopa.gov](mailto:hiddenvalley@mag.maricopa.gov)) for all electronic communications regarding the Hidden Valley study.