

I-11 Alternatives Selection Report and Meeting Summary Report now available

Documents explain corridor options to be studied further, summarize comments

PHOENIX – After months of technical analysis that includes the results of public, agency and tribal input gathered earlier this year, the Arizona Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, has published two key documents as part of the environmental study for Interstate 11 from Nogales to Wickenburg.

The *Alternatives Selection Report* and *2017 Agency and Public Information Meeting Summary Report*, available at i11study.com/Arizona under the Documents tab, reflect a year’s worth of study, analysis and meetings with communities, agencies and stakeholders, and present the corridor alternatives moving forward.

“Interstate 11 is part of the larger picture when we talk about planning for Arizona’s transportation future and enhancing our state’s Key Commerce Corridors,” ADOT Director John Halikowski said. “As we look to invest and prioritize needs to improve our state highway system, we must consider how to better connect people, communities and markets. Efforts like this I-11 study begin with planning, and that includes the technical work and the equally important conversations we have with the public every day.”

The *Alternatives Selection Report* defines and evaluates a reasonable range of corridor options to advance to the next phase of the three-year Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Ultimately, these corridor options will be assembled into end-to-end alternatives that run throughout the entire 280-mile long corridor from Nogales to Wickenburg.

A Tier 1 environmental study evaluates proposed 2,000-foot wide corridors that could contain specific routes. A Tier 2 environmental study will narrow the corridors even further into 400-foot alignments that identify specific roadways.

The corridor options presented in the *Alternatives Selection Report* consider transportation performance, environmental concerns, community and economic development, and public, agency and tribal input. Moving forward, the corridor options presented in the *Alternatives Selection Report* will be further evaluated, and the outcomes of this analysis will be included in the Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement that is scheduled for completion in 2018. The draft environmental document will also include a no-build alternative.

In May of this year, ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration asked the public and agencies to share their ideas, comments and concerns about the I-11 environmental study. Six public meetings, four agency meetings and five tribal meetings were held, along with a 30-day comment period. The *2017 Agency and Public Information Meeting Summary Report* has helped determine ADOT’s suggestions regarding corridor options as the study enters the Draft Environmental Impact Statement phase.

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More than 2,300 comments were received and documented, and more than 600 people attended the public meetings. Comment themes regarding a new I-11 corridor include consideration of existing and proposed local and regional transportation plans; the need to study opportunities that foster economic development; and the importance of protecting environmentally sensitive resources. While some stated that they prefer freeway alternatives that build upon and improve existing roadway infrastructure, others said they favor building an entirely new interstate freeway.

Comments also noted that a new freeway like Interstate 11 could address transportation concerns, such as relieving regional congestion, improving travel time and reliability, improving freight travel and reliability, and reducing bottlenecks on existing freeways. Other comments favored the no-build alternative, in which Interstate 11 would not be built. All comments are included in the appendices of the *2017 Agency and Public Information Meeting Summary Report*, and the incorporation of comments into the decision-making process is summarized in the *Alternatives Selection Report*.

The next round of public involvement opportunities is scheduled to take place in late 2018, when ADOT presents the Draft Tier 1 EIS, which will consider a reasonable range of build alternatives and the no-build alternative. Public hearings will be held throughout the study corridor as part of the process. The Final Tier 1 EIS, which will include a preferred corridor alternative or the no-build option, and the Record of Decision are expected in 2019.

A future I-11 corridor would likely follow US 93 from the town of Wickenburg north to the Arizona-Nevada line. The corridor that is the focus of the current environmental study begins in Nogales and runs north to the Tucson area, then to Casa Grande, then west of the Phoenix metropolitan area, and ends in Wickenburg.

Throughout the course of the study, the public, communities and other stakeholders are encouraged to comment and help shape the proposed I-11 corridor. All comments are entered into the project record. Comments can be sent to:

- Email: I-11ADOTStudy@hdrinc.com
- Toll-free bilingual telephone hotline: 1.844.544.8049
- Mail:
Interstate 11 Tier 1 EIS Study Team
c/o ADOT Communications
1655 W. Jackson St., Mail Drop 126F
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For more information about the I-11 study, visit i11study.com/Arizona.

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