

I-11 and Intermountain West Corridor Study

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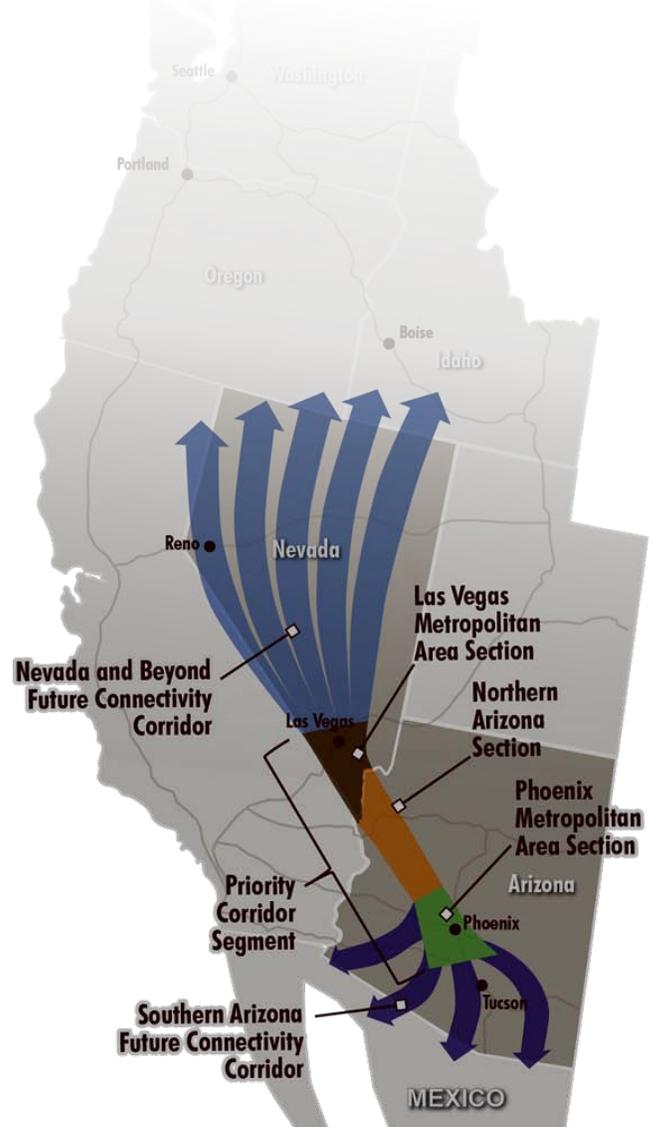
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why is this study being conducted?

Congress recognized the importance of the US 93 Corridor between Phoenix and Las Vegas and designated it as future I-11 in the recent transportation authorization bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Previous planning studies have presumed that if extended north of Las Vegas and south of Phoenix, this Corridor has the potential to become a major multimodal north-south transcontinental corridor through the Intermountain West. The Corridor would connect major cities, existing and future trade hubs, existing and future domestic and international deep-water ports, intersecting Interstate highways, and railroads. This study is being conducted to evaluate the validity of these claims, establish a purpose and need for the Corridor, consider possible alignment(s) and multimodal alternatives, and develop implementation and funding strategies.

What is the study area?

For study purposes, the Corridor is divided into segments. The segment between the metropolitan areas of Las Vegas and Phoenix is considered high priority and will be studied in the most detail to examine preferred alignment(s) for I-11. From Las Vegas to Canada, and from Phoenix to Mexico, potential options for extension of the Corridor will be considered. This will include identifying potential connection points into Mexico. These Corridor segments have been identified in the map shown to the right.



Do you have a map of the proposed route?

No. It is very early in the study process and alternatives/alignments have not yet been developed. Several previous studies have identified potential alignments for the Corridor or a similar north-south Interstate route (e.g., Hassayampa Freeway and the CANAMEX Corridor). As part of this study, review of prior recommendations will occur, building upon them utilizing new information, to determine suitable alternative alignment options. Each feasible alignment, as well as the “no build” option, will be evaluated based on various criteria, including but not limited to: meeting passenger and freight travel needs, compatibility with local plans, community support, environmental impact, and cost.

Notwithstanding maps or proposals from other organizations that might suggest an alignment for I-11, no decision has been made on where the route will go.

If extended north of Las Vegas, will the Corridor connect to Reno?

Once the need for the transportation facility is established, alignment alternatives will be explored between Phoenix and Las Vegas (the highest-priority segment). A range of Corridor routing options north of Las Vegas will be reviewed, which may include connecting to Reno, or other communities in Nevada.

If extended south of Phoenix, will the Corridor connect to Tucson?

Once the need for the transportation facility is established, alignment alternatives will be explored between Phoenix and Las Vegas (the highest-priority segment). A range of Corridor routing options south of Phoenix will be reviewed, which may include connecting to Tucson, or other communities in Arizona.

Will this be only a highway corridor?

Options for multiple modes of transportation will be explored such as highway, freight rail, passenger rail, transit, pipeline and energy/utility transmission. One or more of these options could be paired within the same right of way, or different transportation modes could travel parallel to one another using different alignments. Technology improvements that can enhance travel will also be considered (e.g., real-time/adaptive messaging signs, vehicle communication, etc.).

With US 93 improvements in place, do we really need a freeway between Phoenix and Las Vegas?

As part of this study, the team will investigate and assess the need for a new or improved facility with respect to various factors such as traffic congestion, freight movement, economic development and safety to determine whether the facility is needed, for what purpose, and with what benefit.

When will this Corridor be built?

This is the beginning of a two-year study to determine whether there is a need for a new or improved transportation facility between Phoenix and Las Vegas, with potential extensions north to Canada and south to Mexico. If a need exists, this study will determine viable location(s) for the facility. The study will serve as the foundation for subsequent, more detailed studies (such as environmental and engineering) that are required. No funding is currently available to construct the Corridor. Certain highway segments that could be part of I-11, however, such as the Boulder City Bypass in Nevada, are farther along in the development process and could be constructed sooner than other portions as funding becomes available.

Will I-11 be a toll road?

At this point, no funding is available to construct an Interstate facility in the Corridor. This study will first evaluate the need for the Corridor and then develop high-level cost estimates and options to pay for it. Should the Corridor proceed through implementation, a combination of funding sources and financing will be necessary to build the facility. Various funding sources and project implementation strategies will be investigated, including public-private partnerships, of which tolling is just one of many options.

Is I-11 and Intermountain West Corridor the best project for spending our limited transportation dollars?

As the study progresses, better information will be available to answer this question. Within the first nine months of the project we will assess the need for the facility by conducting a thorough analysis to determine the potential facility's benefits and costs and determine if there is a business case for implementing the project. The results of this business analysis will be shared with our public and private partners to understand where this project fits in the statewide (Arizona and Nevada) and regional priorities for transportation system development.

How is this study being funded?

The I-11 & Intermountain West Corridor Study is being funded jointly by NDOT and ADOT through federal allocations and state resources.

Will this create a safer roadway between Phoenix and Las Vegas?

There has been a significant investment to improve the US 93 corridor between Wickenburg, Arizona and Henderson, Nevada. The route, however, still has a low level of access control; many intersecting roads and driveways provide direct access to US 93 thereby reducing safety and efficiency for traffic movement. Along with other multimodal options, this study will consider an access-controlled roadway, consisting ultimately of a freeway that has access only at fully-controlled traffic interchanges.

What will be done to limit the impacts on wildlife fragmentation and habitat as well as on wilderness lands?

A detailed environmental analysis will be part of subsequent studies for this Corridor. However, during this preliminary phase, several environmental agencies and organizations are part of the project's Stakeholder Partners group, helping to identify areas that are not conducive to new or improved transportation facilities, and advising on mitigation measures that can allow the development of new or improved facilities without fragmenting and therefore jeopardizing wildlife habitats. This sort of collaboration has been successful in previous efforts, including ADOT and the Arizona Game and Fish Department's recent work integrating wildlife crossings with US 93 corridor improvements.

Will this Corridor create urban sprawl?

One of the visions for this Corridor is that it will promote economic development by connecting communities. Throughout this study, the project team will collaborate with the communities along the Corridor to understand their growth plans and develop recommendations consistent with those plans.

Will public input be considered in the evaluation of a potential I-11 & Intermountain West Corridor?

Absolutely. Draft study reports will be posted on the study website (www.i11study.com) for public review and comments will be received and incorporated into final versions. Transportation is personal and every decision that will

be made regarding this Corridor affects someone to some degree. Neighborhoods, businesses and the traveling public will benefit or be adversely affected in some way. NDOT and ADOT strongly believe that residents and visitors to their states are their customers and should be given an opportunity to participate in planning and project development.

Stakeholders, residents, the traveling public, businesses and other interested parties are encouraged to communicate their needs, desires and visions for this Corridor so that NDOT and ADOT, in cooperation with its partners, can better meet the transportation needs. *A Citizen's Guide to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)* is posted on the website and has been developed to help citizens and organizations who are concerned about the environmental effects of federal decision-making to effectively participate in federal agencies' environmental reviews under NEPA. Even though we have not yet begun the NEPA phase, this study embraces the NEPA process because we believe that the public, stakeholders and interested parties need to be involved in and should have the opportunity to influence the transportation planning, design and construction process.

Who will ultimately make the decision on where the Corridor would be located?

The I-11 & Intermountain West Corridor Study is a high priority for NDOT and ADOT, which have pooled their resources and are jointly managing this study; together, the agencies will ultimately be responsible for approving all study decisions. Corridor decisions regarding the preferred alignment(s) and components of the Corridor will be made in subsequent phases of the project and will follow the process established by NEPA. ADOT and NDOT will follow a transparent decision-making process that includes input from the public and Stakeholders Partners in conducting this Corridor study. All interested public agencies, non-profit organizations and private interest groups are invited to participate in a Stakeholder Partners group that will be asked to provide data and other input, and to share their opinions and ideas on decision points throughout the process.

How can I get involved?

Staying informed and submitting your comments are great ways to get involved with this project.

Stay Informed:

- Check out the website (www.i11study.com) for periodic updates
- Submit your email address for inclusion on the project distribution list (see "Get Involved" tab on website)
- Review documents as they become available (see "Project Documents" tab on website)
- Attend public meetings and agency presentations

Submit Comments:

- Using the comment form on the "Get Involved" tab on website
- By calling or mailing our project managers:

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