



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

As of January 2017

What is the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 "Spine" Corridor Master Plan?

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), initiated the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 (I-10/I-17) Corridor Master Plan study (also known as the "Spine" study) for the I-10 and I-17 corridor. This corridor is referred to as the "Spine" because it serves as the backbone for transportation mobility in the metropolitan Phoenix area. In fact, 40 percent of all daily freeway trips in the region use a portion of the corridor.

Where is the corridor located?

The combined 31-mile I-10 and I-17 corridor begins at the Loop 101 and I-17 interchange in the north (known as the "North Stack"), extends through the Durango Curve on I-17, and continues to the I-10 intersection with the Loop 202 (Santan Freeway) in the south (also known as the "Pecos Stack").

What is the purpose of this Corridor Master Plan?

This plan has been developed to lay out a long-term vision of I-10 and I-17 through the year 2040. The plan contains strategies that will be developed, constructed, and opened to traffic over the next 23 years.

Has this corridor been studied in the past?

Yes. The study will integrate information gathered during two previous environmental studies conducted in the corridor over the past decade. The studies, conducted by ADOT and FHWA, included design concept reports and environmental impact statements as part of the Interstate 10 Corridor Improvement Study and Interstate 17 Corridor Improvement Study. These studies looked at ways to add capacity to both I-10 and I-17 in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

What were the outcomes of these previous study efforts?

The two previous studies had identified long-term improvements that would have required more funding than was available in the Regional Transportation Plan for either corridor. However, the rigorous studies also identified several near-term improvements that will be carried forward and implemented by ADOT through a separate but parallel effort.

ADOT and MAG agreed and FHWA accepted the decision to rescind the studies in 2012, after it was determined that separate studies may not result in the best overall plan and that many of the studies' recommendations were not feasible. It is important to note that many of the planning, engineering and environmental findings from those studies have been considered in the recommendations of the I-10/I-17 Corridor Master Plan.

Why was the decision made to study both I-10 and I-17 together, instead of continuing to look at both corridors separately?

By studying and implementing improvements on both corridors together, economies of scale can be realized for a common vision to address existing and future travel demand.



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What has been the study's process?

After completing a Needs Assessment Report for the corridor, the study team identified 349 different concepts to meet the 2040 travel demand in both freeway corridors. The concepts were initially evaluated through a "fatal-flaw" process for suitability and constructability. Remaining concepts were filtered through three additional levels of technical screening and analysis.

The study team used technical data from the Needs Assessment Report and MAG travel models to identify the group of approximately 50 highest performing projects that comprise the Corridor Master Plan Recommendations for improving the I-10 and I-17 corridor.

What are these improvements?

These long-term improvements are a combination of traditional methods of improving capacity, as well as new tools and technology to actively manage the traffic. They include enhancing the reliability of public transportation and nonmotorized modes to provide alternatives to single-occupant vehicles. In summary, the Corridor Master Plan recommendations include:

- Modernizing interstates to current design standards to enhance safety, especially along the older sections of the I-17 freeway.
- Adding a minimum of one-lane throughout entire corridor. Portions of the corridor will see this additional lane as managed capacity that will enhance the reliability of public transportation and shared ride trips. These segments are along I-10, from I-17 to US-60, and I-17, between the I-10 "Split" and Loop 101.
- Improving and reconstructing 24 of the 31 traffic interchanges throughout the corridor to facilitate accessing or exiting vehicles, as well as those crossing both interstates.
- Adding five direct HOV (DHOV) ramps and new interchanges to reduce the need to cross the general purpose freeway lanes to access the HOV lane. This will minimize delays and improve reliability.
- Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian connections across the corridor at 20 locations, including nine new structures for nonmotorized transportation modes.

What are the components of the Corridor Master Plan?

The Spine Study's key outcome will be an improvement and implementation strategy documented as the I-10/I-17 Spine Corridor Master Plan to appropriately manage travel demand and travel movements in the I-10 and I-17 corridors through 2040. The plan also will identify projects to incorporate into the Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. Phases will then be programmed for future environmental clearance, design, right of way acquisition, utility relocation and construction.

How much funding is identified for the Spine Corridor?

The current Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Transportation Plan allocates \$1.47 billion for the Spine corridor. This amount includes funding for any identified near-term improvements in addition to long-term improvements. The Spine study will identify how to best use these funds to achieve the greatest benefit to the region.



Is this enough funding for the Corridor Master Plan?

No. The study has defined the funding shortfalls of the Corridor Master Plan Recommendations so that an approach can be determined for meeting the needs of the entire corridor. Specifically, an implementation strategy is under development so that the immediate need projects will be delivered as early as possible.

Were high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes considered as a strategy for the Corridor Master Plan?

Yes. High occupancy toll (HOT) lanes was an idea evaluated as a strategy for meeting travel demand and for potential revenue generation. In reviewing the technical data from this scenario, it was determined that in order to be successful, such a strategy needs to be approached system-wide rather than corridor-by-corridor. MAG will soon complete a separate, multi-phase Managed Lanes Network Development Strategy project that will further inform discussions on HOT and provide recommendations for a system-wide approach for the region.

What is environmental clearance?

In 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act was enacted to inform the planning process for infrastructure projects. This effort is a federal study process led by FHWA for roadway projects and conducted by ADOT in the MAG region. These studies examine 26 different factors, including such matters as cultural, air quality, environmental justice, and forecasted traffic volumes, to assess the impacts a project may have on the natural and built environment. After the environmental study process, the impacts are assessed and potential mitigation strategies identified to clear the roadway project for construction. Recommendations from the I-10/I-17 Corridor Master Plan have not been through this environmental clearance process.

Did this project use environmental factors to establish the recommendations?

An overview of key environmental factors was conducted during the study process. Information from this overview is identified in this project's *Needs Assessment Report*. This information is valuable for future implementation phases of projects within the Corridor Master Plan. A Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) document will be prepared summarizing these potential early impacts to inform future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) efforts resulting from the Spine study. The findings from this Corridor Master Plan may be adopted during subsequent environmental review process(es).

When could these improvements be constructed along the Spine?

After the Corridor Master Plan is adopted by the MAG Regional Council, the recommended projects will be incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan and eventually programmed for environmental clearance, design, potential right of way acquisition, and ultimately construction. Ultimately, it could take until 2040 before all projects could be constructed and opened to traffic.

Are there projects in the Corridor Master Plan that could be completed soon?

Yes. Concurrently with the Spine study, ADOT, MAG, and FHWA are launching a series of near-term improvements to address known bottlenecks and increase the capacity of the corridor in strategic locations. These improvements are currently under preliminary development by ADOT and will be prioritized and programmed for design and construction when benefits, costs, and schedules have been quantified.



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What are the opportunities to review and comment on the Corridor Master Plan Recommendations?

A public involvement period began January 10, 2017, and will conclude February 17, 2017. Comments can be made in person at public meetings on the following dates and locations:

<p>Tuesday, January 24, 2017 Maricopa Association of Governments Saguaro Room 302 N First Avenue, Suite 200 Phoenix 85003 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Wednesday, January 25, 2017 Town of Guadalupe El Tianguis Mercado Multipurpose Room 9201 S Avenida del Yaqui Guadalupe 85283 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, January 31, 2017 Washington Activity Center Multipurpose Room 2240 W Citrus Way Phoenix 85015 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.</p>
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Comments may also be made on-line at spine.azmag.gov.

What are the next steps?

The input received from the public will inform the study process and be used to refine the project's recommendations as needed. The Corridor Master Plan will be considered by the MAG Regional Council later this year for adoption into the Regional Transportation Plan. After this action is taken, project funding and scheduling can be undertaken for implementing the projects identified in this Corridor Master Plan recommendation.