

Widening 26-mile stretch of I-10

Over the last decade, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has been expanding the capacity of I-10 between Phoenix and Tucson in segments. Between Tucson and State Route 387 near Casa Grande, I-10 has three lanes in each direction, leaving 26 miles across the Gila River Indian Community, between the Loop 202 interchange south of Phoenix to just south of SR 387, as the only remaining stretch with two lanes in each direction.

This segment is considered critical for Arizona's economy, as it links the state's two largest metropolitan areas, while also considered a Key Commerce Corridor, providing a key link for national and international movement of freight. Arizonans use this route to commute to and from Phoenix daily from rural communities. Locally, the route also serves the Gila River Indian Community by providing key connections to employment, medical, educational and other necessary services both within and outside the Community.

The I-10 bridges over the Gila River within this section are part of a separate ADOT project that is excluded from this study but closely coordinated with the Community.

In summer of 2019, ADOT and partner agencies took an essential first step toward studying ways to increase the capacity of this section.

In collaboration with the Gila River Indian Community, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Federal Highway Administration and the Maricopa Association of Governments, ADOT has prepared a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)-compliant Environmental Assessment and an engineering Design Concept Report to evaluate improvements to I-10. The study process:

- developed alternatives and options, including a no-build alternative
- evaluated cost, right-of-way, engineering and environmental considerations
- documented mitigations necessary to offset identified impacts with the preferred alternative

will select a preferred alternative based on technical analysis and agency and public feedback. On August 19, ADOT released the draft EA and DCR for public review and comments, which will be accepted through October 9 (see links at end).

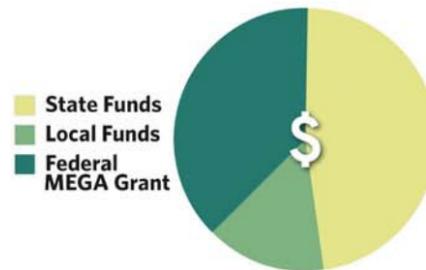
Proposed improvements / considerations

In addition to the no-build alternative, two build alternatives are being considered. Both would widen I-10 from two lanes to three lanes in each direction, the difference being whether this is accomplished in the median or to the outside of I-10.

The study is also evaluating extending HOV lanes on I-10 from Loop 202 south to the Riggs Road interchange with median widening, as well as improvement options for existing interchanges and roads that cross over I-10 in this corridor. Finally, the study is evaluating an option that adds a broadband fiber optic facility into the corridor.

Proposed improvements include:

- adding a new general purpose lane in the median in both directions for the entire 26 miles
- extending the HOV lane in each direction from Loop 202 to Riggs Road
- improving interchanges and crossroads for capacity, safety and multimodal (bike/pedestrian) crossings, and addressing age/condition issues



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- removal of Dirk Lay Road crossing I-10 and the return of the associated easement/right-of-way
- replacing aging, narrow Gila River Bridges as a part of a separate study
- installing sensors, cameras, variable message signs and other safety-related freeway management technology.

Public hearings

Three in-person and one virtual public hearing will be held to provide an overview of the draft EA and DCR, share ADOT's preliminary recommendation and accept public comment. The same information will be presented at each meeting.

In-person public hearings

- Wednesday, Sept 7 2022, Chandler
- Tuesday, Sept 13 2022, Casa Grande
- Thursday, Sept 15 2022, Sacaton

Virtual public hearing

- Tuesday, Sept 20 2022 (call-in/online Webex)

Following public hearings and comment period, the team will evaluate all input from the Gila River Indian Community, partner agencies and the public, and select a final alternative. This selection, combined with input from the public hearing and comment period, will be documented in the Final EA and DCR documents, to be published online.

Funding and implementation

ADOT, MAG, BIA, FHWA and the Gila River Indian Community efforts to deliver this project include securing the necessary funding. Estimated cost is about \$990 million (including the Gila River Bridge replacement project). Should a build alternative be selected, the study will also determine how construction should be implemented over time.

To date, about \$640 million has been allocated by the State and MAG, including \$400 million as part of the State Budget for fiscal year 2023. Leveraging this state and local funding, ADOT applied for a federal MEGA grant to close the gap of approximately \$360 million. Completion of the engineering and environmental study is required for any improvements to be eligible for federal funding. (All values are expressed in Fiscal Year 2024 dollars.) If successful, the combination of state, local and federal funds will allow project construction to begin as quickly as possible without budgetary constraint delays.

Info / public hearing details:

- i10wildhorsepasscorridor.com
- i10wildhorsepasscorridor.com/onlinehearingtool
- azdot.gov



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