



Interstate 11 Corridor Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement Nogales to Wickenburg

Fall 2018

PROJECT UPDATE

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) are preparing a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Interstate 11 (I-11) Corridor between Nogales and Wickenburg, Arizona. The Tier 1 EIS will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other regulatory requirements to assess the potential social, economic, and natural environment impacts of a No Build Alternative (i.e., do-nothing option) and a reasonable range of I-11 Build Corridor Alternatives for a proposed transportation facility within the I-11 Corridor Study Area.

The EIS process started in May 2016. FHWA and ADOT conducted public meetings in June 2016 and May 2017, as well as other outreach to tribal communities and stakeholders, and developed a set of I-11 Corridor options for further study in the Tier 1 EIS. These were developed based on technical analysis; recommendations in prior studies and plans; and input from the public, tribal communities, and agencies.

The Draft Tier 1 EIS document will be completed in early 2019 and made available for a minimum 45-day public comment period, which will include public hearings.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Visit the study website at:

 i11study.com/Arizona

To inquire or comment on the study, please contact the study team:

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THE PURPOSE AND NEED FOR I-11

Defining the Purpose and Need for a project is a fundamental part of the NEPA process and provides the basis for identifying, evaluating, and screening corridor alternatives. It is one of the key components in determining a recommendation for a preferred corridor for I-11.

▶▶ THE PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the I-11 Corridor is to:

- Provide a high priority, high capacity, access-controlled, transportation corridor;
- Support improved regional mobility for people, goods, and homeland security;
- Connect major metropolitan areas and markets in the Intermountain West with Mexico and Canada; and
- Enhance access to the high capacity transportation network to support economic vitality.



▶▶ THE NEED

The problems, issues, and opportunities that support the need for a proposed transportation facility are:

Population and
employment
growth



Congestion and
travel time reliability



System
linkages and
regional
interstate
mobility

Access to economic
activity centers



Homeland
security
and
national
defense



The full Purpose and Need Statement is available on the study website (i11study.com/Arizona).

DEVELOPMENT OF I-11 CORRIDOR OPTIONS

A set of corridor options were developed through a systematic process based on concepts from prior studies, input received during the public and agency meetings, as well as various topographical, environmental and other technical planning information that identified opportunities and constraints. These options were evaluated to identify a reasonable range of Build Corridor Alternatives, essentially a shortlist of alternatives. The next step is to advance the Build Corridor Alternatives, along with a No Build Alternative (i.e., a do-nothing option), into a Tier 1 EIS - a detailed environmental analysis to recommend a preferred alternative for the I-11 Corridor.



Prior Studies



Agency and Public Meetings



Tribal Coordination



Technical Analysis



REASONABLE RANGE OF BUILD CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES FOR TIER 1 EIS ANALYSIS

The Build Corridor Alternatives are broken into shorter options to help identify specific issues along the 280-mile corridor from Nogales to Wickenburg. Each option is assigned an alphabetical letter to differentiate one corridor option from another. The corridor options will be combined to create alternatives from Nogales to Wickenburg that will be compared in the Tier 1 EIS to the No Build Alternative, which represents a benchmark against which to evaluate potential impacts.

WHAT WE HEARD

Government agency, tribal, and public input was received through a 45-day scoping period at the onset of the I-11 Corridor environmental review process in May 2016. During this time period, six public scoping meetings and three agency scoping meetings were held. Comments could also be submitted through an online survey and by email, mail, or voicemail. In total, 834 public comments were received during the scoping period. This input was an important contributor to determining the range of alternatives recommended for further study, as well as defining the scope of issues to be addressed in the Tier 1 EIS.

Throughout 2016 and 2017, a series of meetings also occurred with the Four Southern Tribes (Ak-Chin Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Tohono O'odham Nation), Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and any other tribal government requesting individual meetings. Input received ultimately led to new data sources and refined corridor options.

Initial screening results and preliminary recommendations of corridor options were presented to agency, tribal, and public stakeholders for review and input in May 2017. The feedback received during this 30-day period provided insight for continued study into the key environmental issues throughout the corridor, preferences for I-11 locations, and transportation needs. This input was an important factor in the elimination of some options prior to the EIS phase of study, and determining the range of issues that will be addressed in more detail in the Tier 1 EIS.

The results of the alternatives screening are shown on the map. The corridor options in blue will be studied further in the Tier 1 EIS; those in gray have been eliminated.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Tier 1 EIS will provide more detailed analysis regarding potential environmental impacts and mitigation strategies. A Draft Tier 1 EIS will be prepared and made available for public review and comment in early 2019. ADOT is planning multiple public hearings during the Draft Tier 1 EIS review period and will request input from government agencies, tribal communities, members of the public, and other stakeholders.

A Final Tier 1 EIS will be issued in 2020 that responds to public, tribal, and agency input received during the Draft Tier 1 EIS review period. At the conclusion of the NEPA process in 2020, FHWA and ADOT will determine a Selected Build Corridor Alternative for I-11, or select the No Build Alternative, which will be documented in the Record of Decision. If a Build Corridor Alternative is selected, implementation would occur when funding is available and would require additional design, environmental review, and permitting.

More detailed study of the I-11 Build Corridor Alternatives and the No Build Alternative will occur as part of the Tier 1 EIS. The EIS will address a variety of resource topics such as:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Construction-Related Impacts
- Economic Impacts
- Geology, Soils, and Prime Farmlands
- Hazardous Materials
- Historical, Archaeological, Architectural, or Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Noise and Vibration
- Recreation
- Social Resources/ Environmental Justice
- Transportation
- Visual and Aesthetic
- Water Resources

I-11 TIER 1 EIS SCHEDULE

