

Management Committee INFORMATION SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM # 5H



DATE

September 7, 2023

SUBJECT

Update on the Interstate 10: Deck Park Tunnel to the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 Split Freeway Corridor Planning Study

CONTACT

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SUMMARY

Funding was identified for the Interstate 10 (I-10): Deck Park Tunnel to the I-10/Interstate 17 (I-17) Split Freeway Corridor Planning Study as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget. This section of I-10, known as the "Inner Loop," was one of the last portions of the Federal Interstate Highway Program to be built in Arizona. Now, 30 years later, this section is one of the most heavily congested highways in the region.

MAG initiated the study in March 2022. In addition to the portion of I-10 between the Deck Park Tunnel and the I-10/I-17 Split interchange, the study also includes portions of State Route 51 (SR 51) and the I-10/Loop 202/SR 51 system interchange, known as the "Mini Stack." This section of I-10 provides critical regional connectivity, including access to downtown Phoenix, Sky Harbor International Airport, regional entertainment districts, and access to other freeways.

In addition to high levels of congestion, the corridor is also faced with unreliable travel times – in part due to the large number of vehicle crashes occurring in the corridor.

Project Objectives:

To manage the study, a project team comprised of staff from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), City of Phoenix, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Sky Harbor International Airport, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and MAG was formed. The study team has generated five objectives to be achieved by the recommendations of this study, which are described below.

➤ Improve safety

In the six years from 2016 to 2021, there has been an average of more than five crashes per day along this six-mile freeway corridor. Improving safety is a high priority.

➤ Enhance traffic operations

As part of the study, bottleneck locations, queuing, and speed differential – the difference in speeds found in different lanes – are being identified. Speed differential creates weaving difficulties, incentives for queue jumping, and sudden stops and starts. All of these together cause inefficient traffic operations and increase the potential for crashes.

➤ Enhance access to and from downtown Phoenix and Sky Harbor Airport

Improvements to I-10 could affect street congestion levels, intersection operations, and circulation within downtown Phoenix as well as the airport. Consideration is being given to the impact of proposed improvements throughout the entirety of the system.

➤ Protect the surrounding communities from negative impacts

The study team is identifying where there may be issues to the surrounding communities. The intention is to include these issues in the evaluation to be sure the needs of the communities are adequately considered as different improvement strategies are evaluated and recommendations are proposed.

➤ Accommodate regional travel needs

This section of I-10 accommodates a lot of regional, statewide, and interstate traffic.

Alternatives Being Evaluated:

Altogether, the study team is considering more than 100 ideas for improving this freeway corridor. Alternatives range from physical improvements, such as the addition of lanes or relocation of entry/exist ramps to reduce weaves, to operational improvements such as improving communications or changing the use of specific lanes.

The study is scheduled to conclude its alternatives assessment late this year and to bring its recommendations to MAG committees in the spring. The study’s final recommendations will establish the framework for future improvements funded through the extension of Proposition 400.

PUBLIC INPUT

The public engagement plan has begun. A public survey will be conducted in September and October to receive comments on the key issues to be addressed in the study; an in-person public meeting will be held in the winter of 2024 to present and receive comments on the recommendations.

PROS & CONS

PROS: Improvements to I-10 between the Deck Park Tunnel and the I-10/I-17 Split Interchange will enhance regional connectivity, improve travel time reliability, and improve safety for motorists and non-motorists.

CONS: None.

TECHNICAL & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

TECHNICAL: The identification of alternative improvements is completed, and the alternatives are currently being evaluated for their effectiveness.

POLICY: The study’s final recommendations will establish the framework for future improvements funded through the extension of Proposition 400.

ACTION NEEDED

Information and discussion.

PRIOR COMMITTEE ACTIONS

None.