Planning Partners
June 27, 2013

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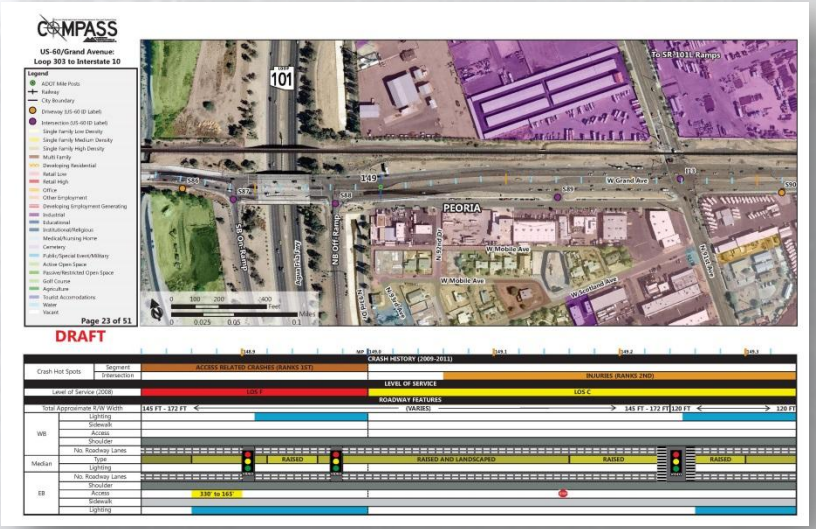
Recent Activities Summary

- Meetings held:
  - Surprise – June 11;
  - Business and Economic Development Focus Group – June 11; and
  - Rail and Freight Focus Group – June 11.
- Data collected and analyzed:
  - Existing Access Conditions;
  - Existing Railroad Operations; and
  - Expressway Documents.



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Recent Activities Summary

- Developed Existing Conditions Mapbook.
- Investigated preliminary corridor concepts.
- Two new documents:
  - Existing Access Management; and
  - Focus Group Summary.

US-60/Grand Avenue
Corridor Optimization, Access Management, and System Study (COMPASS)
Loop 303 to Interstate 10

NOTES

US-60/Grand Avenue COMPASS
Loop 303 to Interstate 10

Focus Groups
June 11, 2013

US-60/Grand Avenue is an important regional facility controlled and maintained by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) as part of the National Highway System (NHS). Because of its regional significance, and importance to local agencies, it has been the subject of numerous studies, improvement projects, and public interest. It serves multiple purposes, including local access, commuter travel, and freight movement. It also serves as a link to Kingman, Arizona and Las Vegas, Nevada.

As the region and communities along the corridor have developed, the need to reach a consensus on the ultimate future role for the corridor has never been greater. Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has initiated the Corridor Optimization, Access Management Plan, and System Study (COMPASS) along the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor. The study area begins at the State Route 303 Loop traffic interchange in Surprise and ends at the Willetta Street intersection in Phoenix. It passes through portions of the City of Surprise, City of El Mirage, Town of Youngtown, City of Peoria, City of Glendale, City of Phoenix, and Maricopa County. The corridor is operated and maintained by ADOT.

As part of the study, interested public agencies, non-profit organizations and private interests groups were invited to participate in two topical focus groups. On June 11, 2013, the Business and Economic Development Focus Group was held in the morning and the Rail and Freight Focus Group in the afternoon. A total of 28 participants signed into the two focus groups.

Photo 1: Facilitated dialogue

The comments presented in this report represent input from Stakeholder Partners during the focus group process and will be reviewed and considered by the study team and planning partners.

The purpose of these focus groups was to provide an opportunity to validate and add to the information that has already been gathered by the study team and to receive feedback on the four corridor concepts. The four corridor concepts emerged from trends identified through stakeholder interviews, Charter and Planning Partner meetings, and technical research conducted to date. Access management principles are inherent to each concept; however, the principles differ and will be tailored to each concept.

1 | Page

COMPASS

emorandum (Administrative Draft)
Conditions Report Regarding
Management
ect task A3
or: Maricopa Association of Governments
y: Philip B Demosthenes LLC
on with: Burgess & Niple, Inc.

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Existing Conditions Summary

- Characteristics of the Corridor:
  - Typically six-lanes with uniform posted speed of 45mph.
  - Traffic signals are not interconnected.
  - ITS system planned but not yet implemented.

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Existing Conditions Summary

- Characteristics of the Corridor:
  - Corridor includes grade separated and multi-leg intersection.
  - Planned grade separations include:
    - Bell Road;
    - 103rd Avenue; and
    - Several others not yet determined.

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Existing Conditions Summary

- Railroad Operations:
  - Maximum 10 trains per day.
  - Unit trains (~100 cars/one destination) are preferred.
  - Vehicle Transfer Facility in El Mirage.
  - Intermodal Lift Facility at 51st Ave in Glendale.
  - Mobest Yard in Phoenix.
  - Ennis Wye in El Mirage.
- Top 2 railroad crash locations in AZ*:
  - 35th Ave/Indian School Rd (#1); and
  - 27th Ave/Thomas Rd. (#2).

*Based on August 2007 AZ Republic

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Existing Conditions Summary

- Existing Land Use:
  - Single Family High Density is most prevalent (27.4%).
  - Industrial and Transportation (13.7% and 12.3%).
  - Significant amount of land is vacant or under-utilized.
  - General plans typically call for commercial use with a transit focus.

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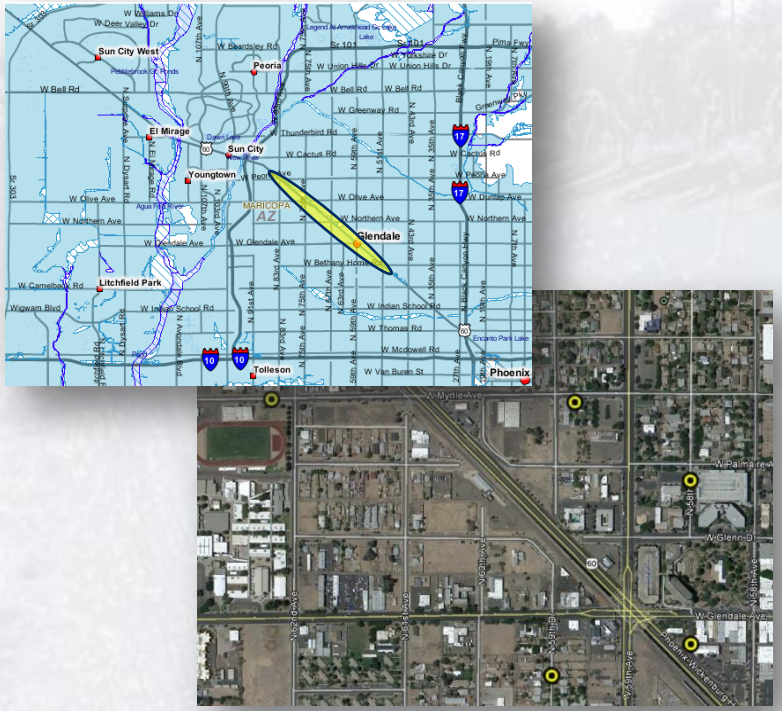
Existing Conditions Summary

- Environmental Overview:
  - Flood and wetland areas limited to the Agua Fria and New River.
  - Historic properties and districts in Old Town Peoria and Glendale.
  - One property adjacent to the corridor on north side of US-60 ROW (First National Bank of Glendale).
  - Contaminated sites and underground storage with higher concentration near Phoenix.



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Existing Conditions Summary

- Environmental Overview:
  - **All tracts** along the corridor contain a protected population.
  - Low Income is not a factor in the corridor.

Environmental Justice Summary Number of Census Tracts with Higher than Average Population Concentrations	
Elderly	20 out of 51 (39%)
Female Head of Household	35 out of 51 (68%)
Low Income*	0 out of 51 (0%)
Minorities	40 out of 51 (78%)
Persons with Disabilities	10 out of 51 (19%)
Limited English Proficiency	29 out of 51 (59%)
*Low Income with one individual = $11,490; $4,020 is added per person.	

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Existing Conditions Summary

- Traffic Operations:
  - Quality Level of Service (QLOS) – Based on 2008 Conformity Model.
  - The majority of the corridor is QLOS C, excluding:
    - QLOS D - 105th Avenue (MP 147.5) to 99th Avenue (MP 148.2).
    - QLOS F – 99th Avenue (MP 148.2) to SR-101L northbound off-ramp (MP 149.0).

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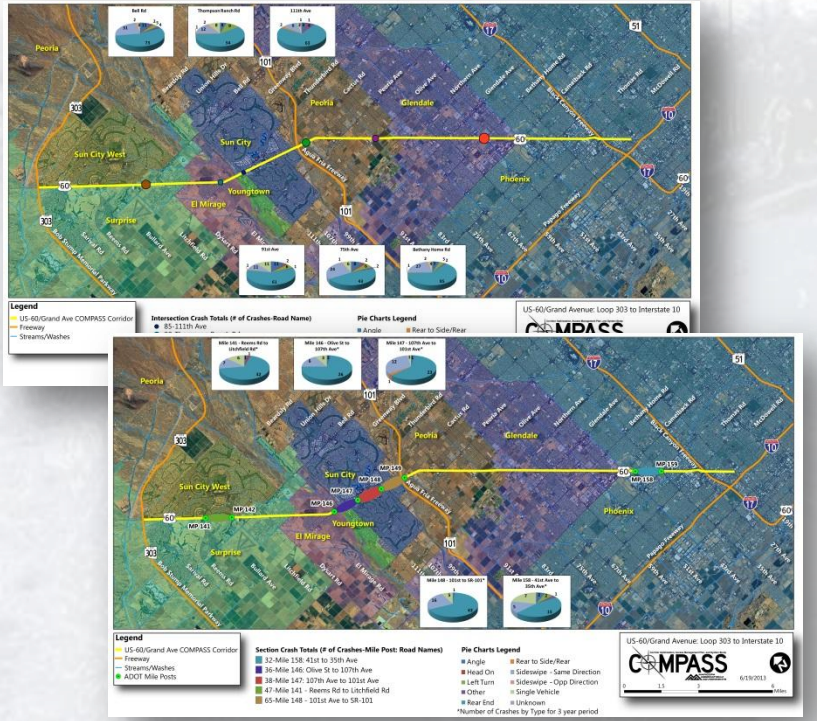
Existing Conditions Summary

Accident History – predominately rear-end crashes:

- **Intersection** hot spots:
  - Bell Rd,
  - Thompson Ranch Rd,
  - 111th Ave,
  - 91st Ave,
  - 75th Ave, and
  - Bethany Home Rd.
- **Segment** hot spots:
  - Reems Rd to Litchfield Rd,
  - Olive St to 107th Ave,
  - 107th to 101st Ave,
  - 101st Ave to SR-101L, and
  - 41st Ave to 35th Ave.



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Existing Conditions Summary

- **Access Design Features**:
  - Under designed access points.
  - Significant speed differentials at access points.
    - One factor in rear-end crash rates.
  - Irregular signal spacing:
    - Poor progression and queue backups.
    - Congestion is traffic signal related.
  - Conflict points closely spaced.
- Access is the **key roadway design element** impacting capacity and safety on a major arterial.

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Focus Group Meeting
Business/Economic Development Interests

- 20 participants.
- Multimodal corridor is critical.
- Connect activity centers.
- Improve pedestrian movement.
- **Consider road diet.**
- Include art, landscape and beautification.
- Concept #4 tends to support redevelopment and new land use patterns.
- Recognize freight movement is in the corridor and new “rail-served” trend.

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Focus Group Meeting
Rail and Freight Interests

- 8 participants.
- All concepts promote some level of economic development.
- BNSF Railway is important.
- Longer spurs and need to attract manufacturing customers.
- Lack of rail capacity.
- High vehicle/rail crash rates.
- **Need to understand BNSF long range plans.**

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Focus Group Meeting

Summary

- Grand Avenue will continue to be important to the region.
- Concepts should reflect history and character with consistency.
- **Connect activity centers.**
- Support redevelopment.
- Mixed use development pattern is planned for in local planning.
- BNSF Railway is an important economic driver in West Valley.

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Four Concepts

1. Continue with planned improvements from **Regional Transportation Plan** (No Action).

2. Reconsider the US-60/**Grand Avenue Expressway** Option.

3. Plan for **Commuter Rail with operational improvements**.

4. Identify an **Economic Development-centric opportunity** with multi-modal enhancements.

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1. Continue with planned improvements from **Regional Transportation Plan** (No Action).

- Maintains current corridor character.
- Leaves economic development opportunities unchanged.
- Requires general plan updates.
- Limits transit options.
- Addresses some operational issues.
- Provides minimalist approach for improvements.
- Requires limited additional funds.

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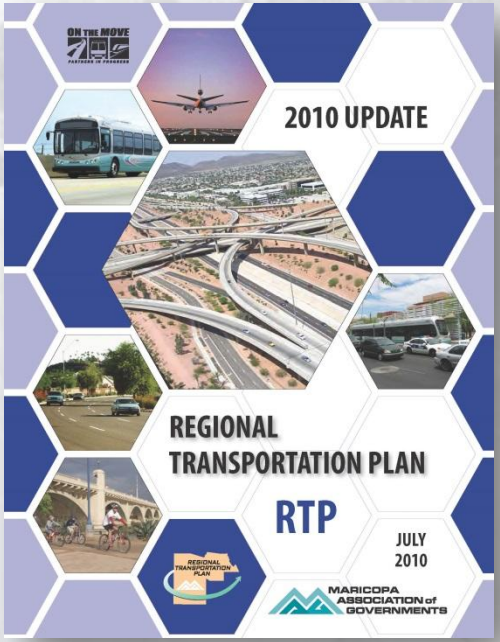
Preliminary Corridor Concepts

Adopted Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- Identified improvements:
  - Bell Road grade separation;
  - Thunderbird/Thompson Ranch, and
  - 103rd Avenue overcrossing.
- Candidate grade separations:
  - 83rd Ave and Peoria Ave;
  - Northern Parkway flyover ramp; and
  - 19th Ave/McDowell Ave.



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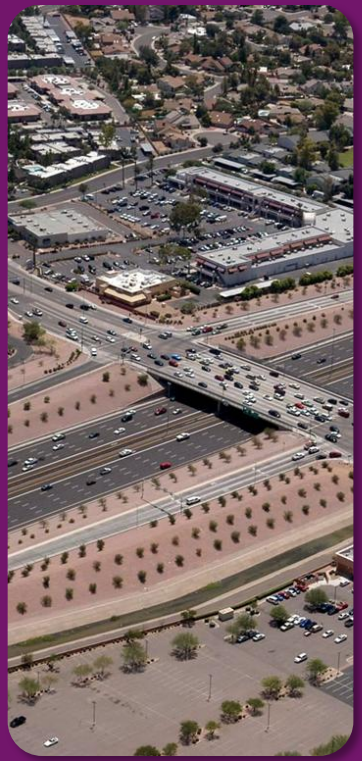
2. Reconsider the US-60/**Grand Avenue Expressway** Option.



- Expands high-speed character of the corridor.
- Requires additional major roadway infrastructure.
- Creates potential impacts to downtown areas, including perceived barriers/divisions.
- Involves right-of-way acquisitions.
- Implements significant access limits to adjacent parcels.
- Calls for additional funds/investment.
- Requires moving intermodal facility.
- Becomes unfriendly to pedestrians and bicyclists.

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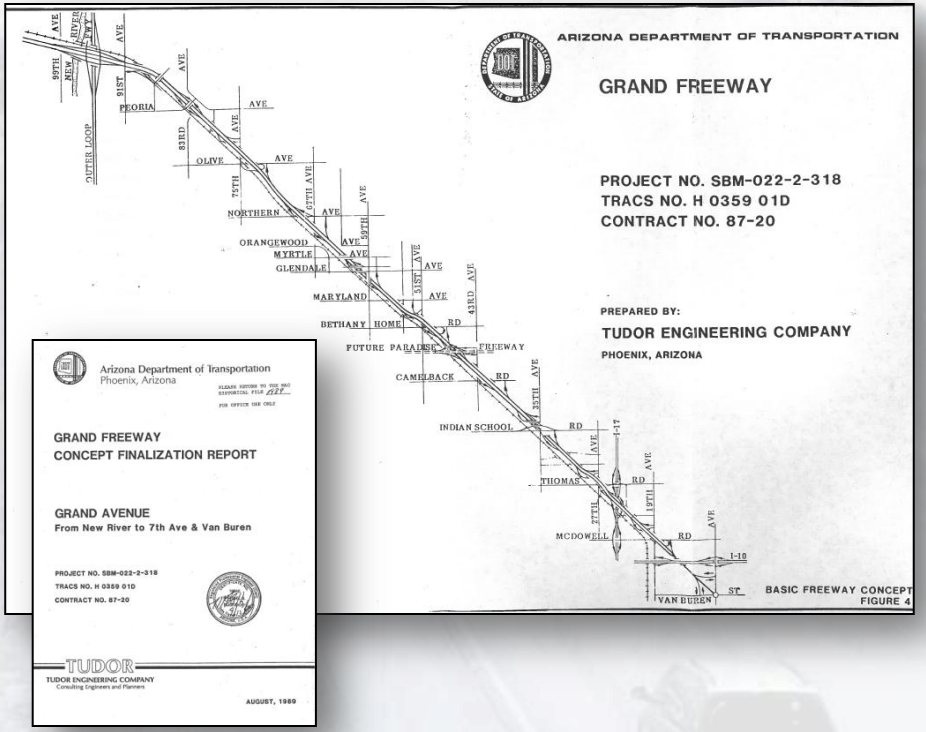
Preliminary Corridor Concepts
Expressway

- **Proposition 300 Concept**:
  - Paradise Parkway
  - Traffic Volumes (170,000+)
  - 6- and 8-lane sections
  - 12 full or partial interchanges east of SR-101L.
  - Cost estimate from SR-101L to Van Buren = $828.2 million (1989).



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3. Plan for **Commuter Rail with operational improvements**.

- Operates during peak-hour, peak-direction only.
- Limits potential transit ridership.
- Requires BNSF Railway coordination for operation.
- Constrains transit routing within the corridor.
- Calls for additional funds/investment.
- Provides fewer opportunities for station locations.

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Preliminary Corridor Concepts

Commuter Rail and Operational Performance

- MAG Commuter Rail Study
  - Proposed Stops:
    - 1st Ave/Harrison St.
    - 17th Ave/Harrison St.
    - Grand Ave/59th Ave.
    - Grand Ave/83rd Ave.
    - Grand Ave/Santa Fe Ln.
    - Grand Ave/Bell Rd.
    - Grand Ave/SR-303L.

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4. Identify an **Economic Development-centric opportunity** with multi-modal enhancements.

- Requires transit feeder system that presently does not exist.
- Requires general plan updates to promote alternative travel modes.
- Requires corridor partner agency coordination.
- Limits expansion and capacity to the roadway portion of the US-60 corridor.
- Requires potentially substantial funding by all affected and potentially regional agencies.
- Involves potentially less right-of-way acquisitions.

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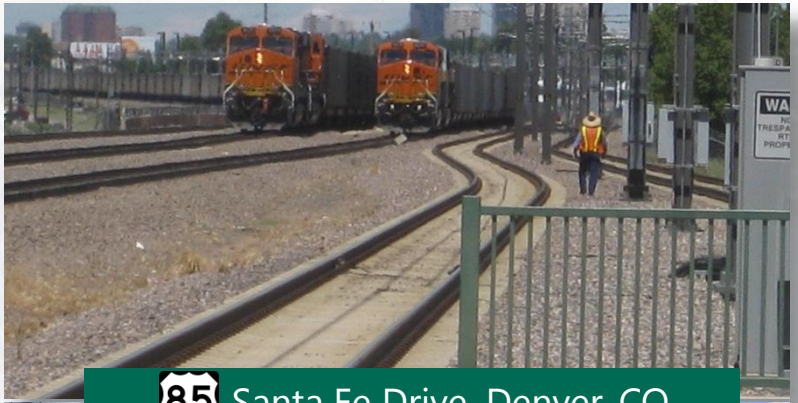
Technical Memorandum 3:

National Case Study Review

- Examined other similar urban travel corridors.
- Key themes:
  - All **supposed** to be a **higher functional class** than today;
  - Initial focus was **traffic accommodation**; and
  - Evolved to **people-moving corridors**.



85 Santa Fe Drive, Denver, CO

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Preliminary Corridor Concepts

Economic Development with Enhanced Connections

- Looking at the corridor differently.
- **New Corridor Operating Principles.**
  - Other High Capacity Transit options.
  - Signalization improvements.
  - Additional and enhanced grade separations.
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian opportunities.

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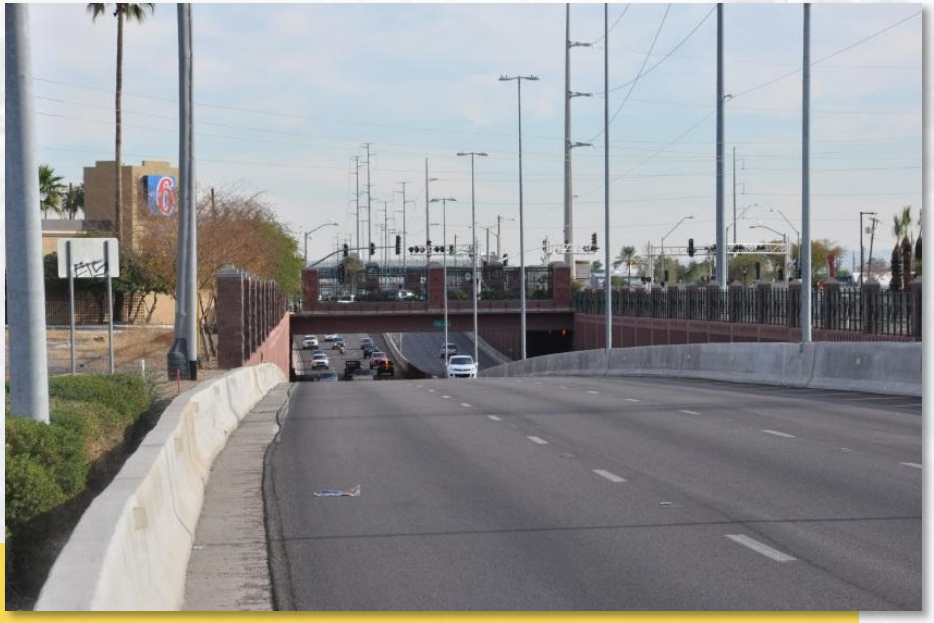
Next Steps

Geographic Meetings:

- Glendale Council Chambers
  - **July 22**, 2013, 6-8pm.
- AZ Communiversity at Surprise
  - **July 24**, 2013, 6-8pm.



August 14 Charter Partners Meeting.

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Next Steps

- Establish and analyze alternatives:
  - by November 2013.
- Develop Access Management Plan and Policies:
  - by December 2013.
- Project completion:
  - by Spring 2014.

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