

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

INFORMATION SUMMARY... for your review

DATE:

September 11, 2015

SUBJECT:

Update on the ADOT Passenger Rail Study: Tucson to Phoenix

SUMMARY:

This summary transmittal refers to the latest revised ADOT Passenger Rail Study map.

The Yellow Alternative would serve East Valley communities and central Pinal County, and could share right of way with Union Pacific Railroad north of Eloy, where appropriate. The Orange Alternative would serve East Valley population centers and share part of its alignment with the planned North-South Freeway Corridor in Pinal County. The two alternatives would run primarily within the I-10 corridor between Eloy and Tucson.

The Green Alternative, from the previous iteration of the map, was eliminated in the review process largely due to right-of-way issues along I-10 through the Gila River Indian Community, impacts to culturally significant properties and lower ridership. Under the No-Build Alternative, no passenger rail system would be constructed between Tucson and Phoenix. The No-Build Alternative assumes that all proposed highway projects currently funded within the study corridor would be built to provide enhanced capacity for Interstate 10 and the surrounding region.

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Passenger Rail Study has concluded an 18-month public outreach effort pertaining to several options for alternative transportation modes between Tucson and Metro Phoenix. ADOT staff will present the results of this outreach and an update on study progress.

The ADOT Passenger Rail Corridor Study, Tucson to Phoenix, began in Spring 2011. The study is being jointly conducted by ADOT, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). For people traveling between Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona's two largest urban areas, there are limited mobility options beyond the automobile and private motorcoach. The study looked at the potential for future alternative rail transit options connecting the urban areas within the Sun Corridor. Public input, along with multi-agency and stakeholder cooperation, was an essential part of the department's long-range plan to determine which transportation options would best meet the demands for future growth and travel to complement Interstate 10, one of the busiest highways in Arizona.

ADOT, in partnership with the FRA, has released the Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for ADOT's Passenger Rail Corridor Study: Tucson to Phoenix. While the proposed passenger rail project has no identified funding, this environmental impact statement is a step in identifying the cost, impacts and benefits from a rail system serving passengers in Arizona. The Draft Tier 1 DEIS is part of federally required review process, governed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which provides the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the document, along with the recommended alternative. Two corridor alternatives remain for public consideration. (Map attached)

Along with the alternatives, ADOT has identified general locations for stations along the passenger rail line. The route between Tucson and Phoenix is recommended as a blended service to include an express intercity service that would have few stops between the two metropolitan areas and a local commuter service that would potentially stop at all stations within the corridor. The corridors include system hubs located near downtown Phoenix and downtown Tucson. Both include extensions beyond the system hubs: to the northwest and southwest Phoenix metropolitan area and south to Tucson International Airport. However, these extensions are not part of the Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement, but are compatible with the recommendations. The passenger rail line also proposes to serve Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

By the end of this study, a Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement will be published and one rail corridor or the No-Build Alternative will be selected. Once the public comment period concludes on Oct. 30, the rail study team will compile and review all comments and work with our federal partners to develop a Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (ROD). This document will contain a preferred alternative and is expected to be complete by the end of calendar year 2015, along with a Service Development Plan. The Service Development Plan will include infrastructure and operation plans, an implementation plan, demand and revenue forecasts, capital programming, and operation and maintenance costs of a potential passenger rail system.

Additional future environmental work and site-specific studies would be required before a rail system could be constructed. There is currently no construction schedule and there is no funding identified for future rail studies or to build and maintain a rail system. It will be up to the public, stakeholders and policymakers to decide how the project should move forward and how to generate the funding for the system. For more information about ADOT's Passenger Rail Corridor Study, visit azdot.gov/passengerrail.

PUBLIC INPUT:

ADOT has engaged more than 10,000 people through a variety of public open houses, festivals, special events, school outreach, online surveys, media and stakeholder meetings in the MAG, Central Arizona Governments and Pima Association of Governments regions in the past 18 months. Additional ongoing dialogue has occurred with the member agency cities, towns, counties, regions, tribal governments, utilities and railroads since 2011.

PROS & CONS:

PROS: The study will inform the public of the costs, market demand and feasibility associated with building and maintaining high capacity rail transit system between metropolitan Phoenix and metropolitan Tucson.

CONS: The study recommendations currently have no local, regional, state or federal funding.

TECHNICAL & POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

TECHNICAL: The Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement considers two rail alternatives and a no-build option in order to identify the most appropriate corridor for a potential passenger rail line between Tucson and Phoenix. The findings of the ADOT Study will also provide further updated financial and operational detail to MAG for additional updates to the 2010 Commuter Rail System Study.

POLICY: Should ADOT, FTA and FRA select to proceed with Study findings, MAG and member agencies would continue to work with ADOT and those federal agencies in every capacity while passenger rail is implemented in the state. There is currently no local, regional, state or federal funding identified to build, operate or maintain the line.

ACTION NEEDED:

Information and discussion.

PRIOR COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

The item was heard by the MAG Management Committee on September 9, 2015.

MEMBERS ATTENDING

- Darryl H. Crossman, Litchfield Park, Chair
 - Ed Zuercher, Phoenix, Vice Chair
 - # Anna McCray for Bryant Powell, Apache Junction
 - Kevin Artz for David Fitzhugh, Avondale
 - Stephen Cleveland, Buckeye
 - * Gary Neiss, Carefree
 - * Peter Jankowski, Cave Creek
 - Marsha Reed, Chandler
 - Dr. Spencer Isom, El Mirage
 - # Jess Knudson for Lisa Garcia, Florence
 - Alfonso Rodriguez for Phil Dorchester, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
 - Grady Miller, Fountain Hills
 - # Ernest Rubi, Gila Bend
 - * Tina Notah, Gila River Indian Community
 - Patrick Banger, Gilbert
 - Brent Stoddard for Dick Bowers, Glendale
 - Brian Dalke, Goodyear
 - * Rosemary Arellano, Guadalupe
 - Gregory Rose, City of Maricopa
 - Christopher Brady, Mesa
 - Kevin Burke, Paradise Valley
 - Carl Swenson, Peoria
 - # Greg Stanley, Pinal County
 - John Kross, Queen Creek
 - * Bryan Meyers, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
 - Brad Lundahl for Fritz Behring, Scottsdale
 - Rick Buss for Bob Wingenroth, Surprise
 - Andrew Ching, Tempe
 - Reyes Medrano, Tolleson
 - Joshua Wright, Wickenburg
 - Jeanne Blackman, Youngtown
 - Sintra Hoffman for John Halikowski, ADOT
 - Joy Rich for Tom Manos, Maricopa Co.
 - Jyme Sue McLaren for Steve Banta, Valley Metro/RPTA
- * Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.
 # Participated by telephone conference call. + Participated by videoconference call.

PRIOR COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

The item was heard by the MAG Transportation Review Committee on August 27, 2015.

MEMBERS ATTENDING

- Avondale: Jessica Blazina for David Fitzhugh
- * ADOT: Brent Cain
- * Apache Junction: Giao Pham
- # Buckeye: Scott Lowe
- * Cave Creek: Ian Cordwell
- Chandler: Dan Cook, Vice Chair
- El Mirage: Jorge Gastelum
- * Fountain Hills: Randy Harrel
- * Gila Bend: Ernie Rubi
- Gila River Indian Community: Tim Oliver
- Gilbert: Leah Hubbard
- Glendale: Debbie Albert
- * Goodyear: Cato Esquivel
- Litchfield Park: Woody Scoutten
- Maricopa (City): Paul Jepson
- Maricopa County: Clem Ligocki for Jennifer Toth
- # Mesa: Jeff Martin for Scott Butler
- * Paradise Valley: Jim Shano
- * Peoria: Andrew Granger
- Phoenix: Ray Dovalina
- # Pinal County: Louis Andersen
- Queen Creek: Mohamed Youssef
- Scottsdale: Paul Basha
- Surprise: Mike Gent
- Tempe: Shelly Seyler
- Valley Metro: Abhi Dayal for John Farry
- * Wickenburg: Vince Lorefice
- # Youngtown: Grant Anderson

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING

- * Street Committee: Maria Deeb, Mesa
- * ITS Committee: Marshall Riegel, Phoenix
- * FHWA: Ed Stillings
- * Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee: Jim Hash, City of Mesa
- * Transportation Safety Committee: Renate Ehm, City of Mesa

* Members neither present nor represented by proxy.

+ Attended by Videoconference

Attended by Audioconference

PRIOR COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

The item was heard by the MAG Transit Committee on August 13, 2015.

MEMBERS ATTENDING

* ADOT: Jaclyn Meli

Avondale: Kristen Sexton, Vice Chair

* Buckeye: Andrea Marquez

Chandler: Jason Crampton for RJ Zeder

El Mirage: Jose Macias

Gilbert: Kristin Myers

Glendale: Kevin Link for Debbie Albert

Goodyear: Cato Esquivel

Maricopa: Ryan Wozniak for David Maestas

* Maricopa County DOT: Suparna Dasgupta

Mesa: Jodi Sorrell

* Paradise Valley: Jeremy Knapp

Peoria: Stuart Kent

Phoenix: Ken Kessler for Maria Hyatt, Chair

Queen Creek: Mohamed Youssef

Scottsdale: Gregory Davies for Madeline

Clemann

Surprise: Martin Lucero

Tempe: Robert Yabes

* Tolleson: Chris Hagen

Valley Metro: Abhi Dayal for Wulf Grote

Youngtown: Grant Anderson

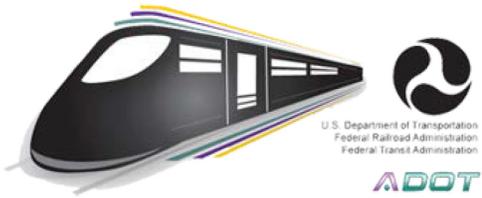
* Members neither present nor represented by proxy.

Participated by teleconference

+ Attended by Videoconference

CONTACT PERSON:

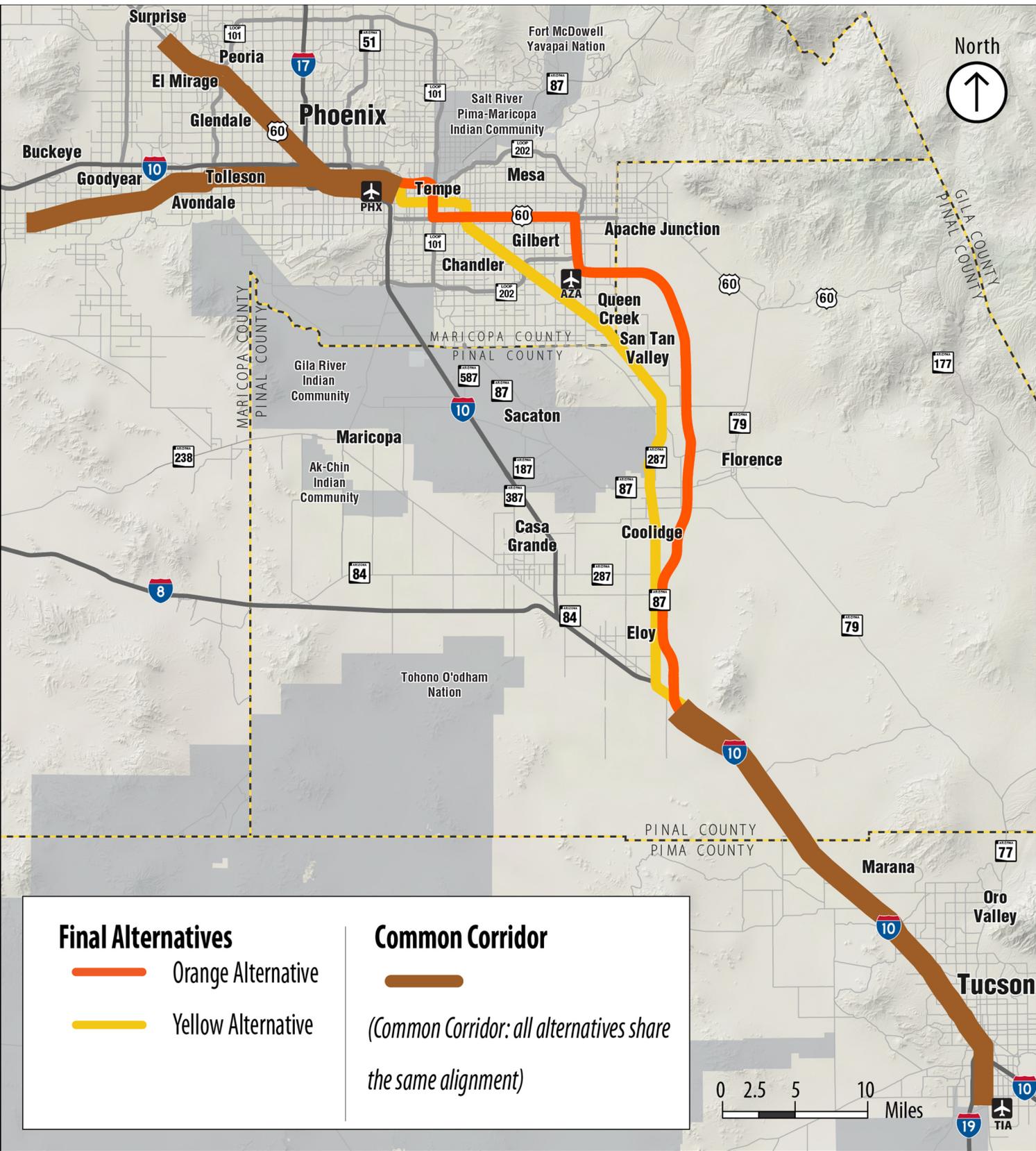
Marc Pearsall, MAG, (602) 254-6300.



PASSENGER RAIL CORRIDOR STUDY Tucson to Phoenix

Revised Map - September 10, 2015

www.azdot.gov/planning/CurrentStudies/PassengerRail/overview



- Final Alternatives**
- Orange Alternative
 - Yellow Alternative

Common Corridor

(Common Corridor: all alternatives share the same alignment)

