

# PROS AND CONS OF AN INTERSTATE 11 IN AVRA VALLEY

**PRO:** Without a new multi-billion-dollar I-11 highway, by the year 2040 travel time between Tucson and Nogales will increase as much as two (2) minutes. (Source: Presentation by Arizona Dept. of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration (ADOT/FHWA) I-11 Study Manager Jay Van Echo at Citizens for Picture Rocks meeting, 8/21/18).

**CON:** Improving existing I-10, instead of building a new highway through the Avra Valley, would cost billions less in taxpayer dollars. (Source: Arizona Dept. of Transportation State Engineer Jennifer Toth at State Transportation Board meeting in Tucson, December, 2008.)

**PRO:** “Nearshoring:” Building I-11 will attract American companies from China to Mexico where wages are now lower than in China. (Source: ADOT/FHWA Purpose and Need Memorandum, 2/28/17.)

**CON:** A new highway through the Avra Valley would bring air, noise and light pollution to tens of thousands of people. Four-fifths of the housing is owner-occupied. Dozens of families would be evicted. (Source: Common sense! See also comments from the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District in Agency and Public Information Meetings, Appendix C; Public comments about impacted families by the Pima County Administrator.)

**PRO:** “Integrative Manufacturing:” I-11 will facilitate research and development in Nevada and Arizona, with manufacture and assembly in Mexico. (Source: ADOT/FHWA Purpose and Need Memorandum, 2/28/17.)

**CON:** A new highway through the Avra Valley would result in vehicle emissions settling in Tucson Water’s Avra Valley CAP settling ponds, potentially threatening the aquifer. Tucson would also lose jobs, businesses and tax revenue from the I-10 corridor. (Source: City of Tucson comments in ADOT/FHWA Scoping Summary Report, Appendix D, 1/25/17.)

**PRO:** I-11 will facilitate the shift of shipping and jobs from U.S. West Coast ports to the Mexican Port of Guaymas. (Source: ADOT/FHWA Purpose and Need Memorandum, 2/28/17.)

**CON:** Tourism would be negatively impacted at Saguaro National Park, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson Mountain Park, Ironwood Forest National Monument, Kitt Peak Observatory, Old Tucson. (Source: Pima Natural Resource Conservation District in Agency and Public Information Meetings, Appendix C.)

**PRO:** I-11 will enrich real estate speculators. (Source: Avra Valley Coalition research based on Assessor records.)

**CON:** Wildlife would be threatened and existing natural linkages imperiled to the point where some species would face extinction. (Source: Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, in Appendix H, Agency and Public Information Meeting Summary Report, 11/30/17.)

**PRO:** I-11 will provide a taxpayer-funded free access highway to a planned private development: What is now called the “Sonoran Corridor” (rejected in 2015 bond election) was originally shown on maps prepared by Pima County as part of I-11 to link I-19 and I-10. Instead of a straight east-west route, it drops south to provide a free access highway for Diamond Ventures planned Swan Southlands development. (Source: I-11 map proposed by Pima County Administrator).

**CON:** With over 3000 public comments in 2017, 89 percent opposed I-11 or any Avra Valley I-11 route, with only ½ of one percent favoring it. ADOT/FHWA convened two “Stakeholders Engagement Groups” in early 2018, by invitation only to try to bring the two sides together. The two groups merged as the ***I-11 Joint Stakeholder Community Planning Group***, calling for I-10 improvements and declaring that **“A bypass through Avra Valley is not acceptable.”** (8/3/18)

**TIME TO ACT:** **The I-11 Study Team is expected to announce its choice between an Avra Valley route, improving the existing I-10 corridor, or the No Build option, by the end of 2018, with public meetings and comment periods early in 2019. While construction may be years away, choices made NOW will be set in stone.**

Pima County Board of Supervisors Resolution 2007-343 opposes “*the construction of any new highways in or around the County that have the stated purpose of bypassing the existing Interstate 10 as it is believed that the environmental, historic, archaeological and urban form impacts could not be adequately mitigated.*”



Source: Pima County Administrator Charles H. Huckelberry

**ON RECORD OPPOSING I-11 IN THE AVRA VALLEY:** Citizens for Picture Rocks; City of Tucson; Pima Natural Resource Conservation District; Garcia Strip Community of the Toak District; San Xavier District; and Schuk District, Tohono O’odham Nation; National Park Service; Friends of Saguaro National Park; Friends of Ironwood Forest; Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection; Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum; Tucson Audubon Society; Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation; I-11 Community Planning Group (several of the above plus Menlo Park Neighborhood Association, National Parks Conservation Association, Erickson Terrascape, Drachman Institute, and Statistical Research); Sierra Club; Friends of Tucson Mountain Park; Sky Island Alliance; Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association; Congressman Raul Grijalva; L.D. 11 State Senator Steve Smith; L.D. 11 State Representatives Vince Leach & Mark Finchem; (partial list, and growing).

**Published by the Avra Valley Coalition, an informal, unaffiliated and non-partisan collection of individuals and groups opposed to I-11 in the Avra Valley.**