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**Citizens Convened by Federal and State Highway Departments Strongly Oppose
Highway in Avra Valley**

Stakeholders find Common Ground in Downtown Route to Create a Sustainable City

Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently convened representatives of several stakeholder organizations in a process to explore two alternative routes for the proposed Interstate 11 through Pima County.

Stakeholders have developed a consensus position that re-designing I-10 and I-19 to accommodate co-location with I-11 could have a positive effect on downtown revitalization, while stating strong opposition to an “I-10 bypass” in Avra Valley. [See letter here](#). “A freeway that separates the Tucson Mountain Park and Saguaro National Park from Tohono O’odham tribal lands and the Ironwood Forest National Monument makes absolutely zero sense,” stated Carolyn Campbell, Executive Director of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection. “The direct, indirect and cumulative effects of a freeway to these natural and cultural iconic places of the Sonoran Desert simply cannot be mitigated. This route should not be under consideration.” Stakeholders believe that there are shortcomings associated with the federal review process that focuses on new highway construction. However, “we believe that there could be a significant opportunity to address some of the historic negative consequences that resulted from the construction of I-10,” said Gene Einfrank, Menlo Park Neighborhood Association President. “The building of I-10 physically divided our community and diminished the quality of life of our downtown and other neighborhoods along the highway. Instead of simply adding new lanes to our existing highway, we should consider redesigning portions of it—either going underground or suspended—so that we can reconnect our city.”

Moreover, stakeholders encourage a broader look at future transportation options, focusing on changes to the management of the existing highway to reduce congestion, including pricing, scheduling, and other programs; technologies that improve traffic flows; and enhancements to the rail system, including light rail and intermodal transportation.

The group recommends ADOT and FHWA refer to the I-11 Super Corridor study final document, which was submitted to ADOT in 2016, to draw inspiration on a comprehensive design. The Sustainable Cities Lab, hosted at the UA College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, completed this transdisciplinary study on the I-11 corridor along with Arizona State University and University of Nevada, Las Vegas. UA's study area focused on opportunities from Marana to south of downtown Tucson. Their outcomes incorporate the addition of light and heavy rail, walking, cycling, new technology for controlling traffic as well as incorporating alternative forms of energy production and transportation.

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