



2010 Statewide Rail Framework Study

Arizona Department of Transportation

<http://www.bqaz.gov>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction

Overview and Purpose

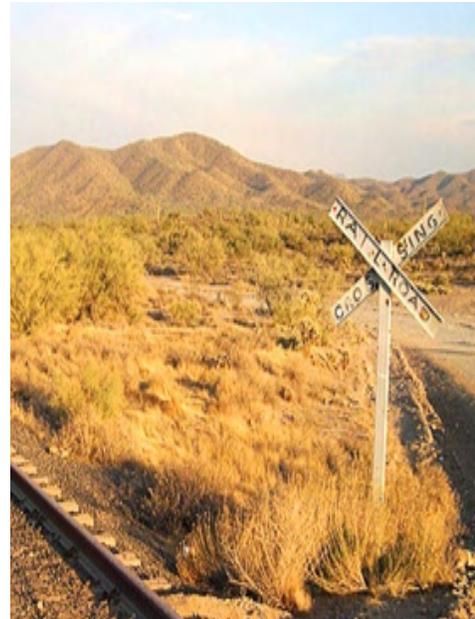
Arizona is one of the nation's fastest-growing states. As a response to the growing demand for transportation infrastructure, the Arizona State Transportation Board has allocated resources for a statewide collaborative process called "Building a Quality Arizona, or "bqAZ" to quantify transportation needs statewide and identify the full range of options to address those needs.

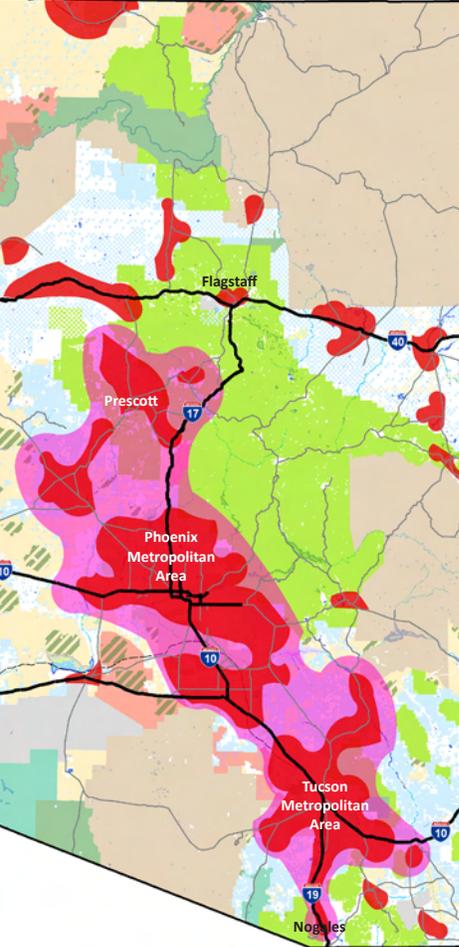
This is an ambitious planning process to develop Arizona's multimodal transportation vision for 2050. This effort is the first time the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has conducted transportation visioning at a statewide scale, specifically incorporating rail. Additionally, this planning endeavor is the first to consider all surface modes on an equal footing; the first to include city, county, and state systems; and the first to fully integrate principles of smart growth, environmental stewardship, responsible economic growth, and tribal participation. The bqAZ process brings together regional transportation planning entities, transit organizations, tribal governments, land management agencies, conservation groups, business and community leaders, the Governor's office, ADOT, other state agencies, and local/regional leaders from across the state to develop a Statewide Transportation Planning Framework that includes transportation alternatives and integrates them with land use and economic planning and development.

A series of Regional Framework Studies provided the basis for the overall Statewide Transportation Planning Framework. As one of the Framework Studies, the Statewide Rail Framework Study is a rail development program outlining specific rail investment opportunities, potential timing for their implementation, and an identification of responsibilities for initiating rail implementation in the State of Arizona that recommends a healthy and sustainable multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods. The objectives for the project include:

- Stimulating responsible statewide economic growth
- Maximizing the use of existing rail infrastructure through strategic investments
- Complementing other existing and planned transportation systems
- Helping address global and regional economic, climate, environmental, and energy issues
- Exploring potential partnerships with the railroads that are mutually beneficial

The project has included a thorough public outreach process, addressed rail transportation needs across Arizona, and considered existing conditions and estimated future needs for both freight and passenger rail, including potential high-speed, intercity and commuter service. To meet the identified improvement needs, recommended programs have been identified, which include modifications to existing rail systems or the establishment of new facilities and services. This executive summary provides an overview of the project phases, with emphasis on the findings and recommendations.





Arizona Sun Corridor Megapolitan Region

Sun Corridor Megapolitan Region

The population of both Phoenix and Tucson is expected to grow by more than 50 percent over the next 20 years. By 2050, both population and employment in Arizona are projected to more than double from their 2005 levels. This growth will lead to increased transportation demand for both passengers and goods that will create unprecedented traffic congestion if the current transportation system is simply maintained.

Arizona cannot address future congestion by continuing to rely almost exclusively on roadways to move people and goods in the future. Rail offers a highly sustainable form of transportation. It is not only an environmentally friendly and resource-sensitive method of moving goods and people; it also provides opportunities for economic growth and development. Expanding rail transportation can greatly enhance the state's transportation network.

The concept of “megapolitan areas” has been developed to describe the expansion and merging of metropolitan regions through the second half of the 20th century, as their boundaries blur – creating a new scale of urban geography. A megapolitan region can loosely be described as a conglomeration of two or more intertwined metropolitan areas with a combined population of five million or more. Megapolitan areas are characterized by interlocking economic systems, shared natural resources and ecosystems, and common transportation systems.

The Arizona Sun Corridor is one of eleven nationally-defined megapolitan areas. Greater Phoenix and Tucson are its principal metropolitan areas, although the megapolitan area is defined as stretching from north of Phoenix (Prescott and central Yavapai County) to south of Tucson (Nogales). In 2005, the entire area had a population of five million people; the projected 2040 population is more than ten million.

As continued population growth place increasing pressure on this network, there is greater need to coordinate planning and policy decisions throughout the Sun Corridor. Connecting its cities with each other, the rest of Arizona and other states (including Sonora, Mexico) will require a comprehensive, multimodal transportation system to foster continuing economic growth and a high quality of life.

The Case for Statewide Rail System Development

Developing rail for both freight and passenger service is advantageous to the state. From a freight perspective, Arizona can benefit from diversion of truck traffic to rail to free up highway capacity for passenger cars, reduce air pollution, conserve energy, and enhance traffic safety. According to the *Arizona Multimodal Freight Analysis Study* (ADOT, 2008), 56 percent of the 2005 truck freight tonnage in Arizona was merely passing through the state. Some 36 percent of all twenty-foot equivalent container units nationally leave the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and move east through Arizona. Through truck traffic produces little direct economic benefit for the state, yet demands the state's resources to build and maintain Interstate and other highways. Furthermore, Arizona is impacted by emissions from tens of thousands of trucks traveling through the state daily. Carried by rail, freight does not drain the state's limited transportation funds, creates less pollution and greenhouse gases per ton mile, and uses less energy per ton mile. With rail transportation, the responsibility for infrastructure falls primarily to the private parties – railroads, and ultimately their customers.

Passenger rail provides an alternative mode of travel for the state's residents, and allows the opportunity to focus growth in more sustainable development patterns throughout the Sun Corridor. Like freight rail, passenger rail can supplement highway capacity, enhance traffic safety, and cut air pollution by reducing automotive travel. National transportation policies are moving to include rail as a high-priority transportation mode. As a result, multimodal projects may have advantages over highway projects when competing for federal funding. A multimodal approach to transportation planning needs to be adopted in Arizona. The state should begin to take advantage of these new funding opportunities so that commuter rail, conventional intercity rail, and ultimately high-speed rail will all have a role to play in Arizona's multimodal transportation framework.

Overview of Arizona's Rail Network

Freight Rail

There are over 1,800 linear miles of existing railroad right-of-way in Arizona. The largest carriers are Union Pacific Railroad (UP) (390 miles) and BNSF Railway (BNSF) (691 miles), Figure 1. These are both Class I carriers, defined as large railroad companies with an operating revenue of \$250 million or more. The UP's mainline Sunset Route traverses the southern portion of the state in an east-west direction. This line carries large amounts of freight between cities on the Pacific Coast and major rail hubs in the Midwest and Texas. UP is improving this line into a high-capacity route (double-tracked throughout Arizona), which will increase its use in the future. Freight and transshipment destinations along the Sunset Route include Yuma and Tucson. UP also operates a branch route that runs north to Phoenix from Picacho. This branch route brings automobiles, building supplies, and other freight into Phoenix daily – serving a large metropolitan area that has no mainline access.

The BNSF has a major east-west mainline, the Transcon, that operates approximately 120 trains per day over its double-tracked (in Arizona) 2,200 mile route from Los Angeles to Chicago. Like UP, BNSF has a branch route that serves Phoenix. The line comes from the north, near Williams where it branches off the Transcon.

Numerous short line railroads also exist in the state. Short line railroads can be defined as independent railroad companies that operate over relatively short distances. Short line operations exist in part to cost-effectively maintain rail operations to existing customers and industries that are no longer profitable to the Class 1 railroads. The short line railroads in Arizona primarily serve mining industries, provide switching operations in support of the Class I systems, and act as feeder lines to those systems.

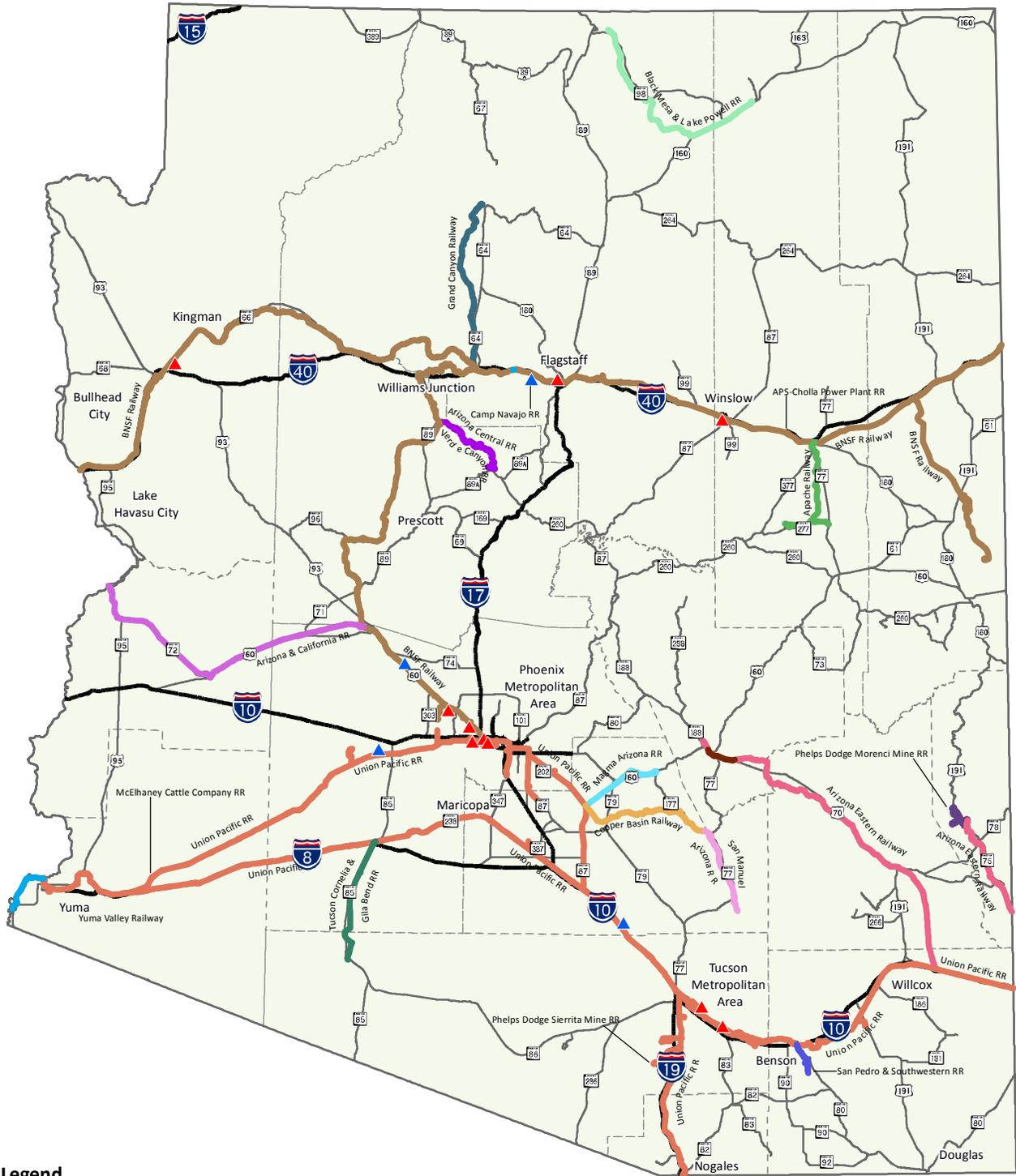
Passenger Rail

Passenger rail service in Arizona is limited to Amtrak and tourist railway services (Figure 2). Amtrak has two routes that travel on freight mainlines through Arizona, using the BNSF Transcon in northern Arizona and the UP Sunset Route in southern Arizona. Three tourist railroads exist in Arizona: the Grand Canyon Railroad, the Verde Canyon Railroad, and the seasonal Copper Spike service of the Arizona Eastern Railroad. These railroads provide excursions or service to and from one destination point.

Numerous intercity rail (ICR) and commuter rail passenger corridors have been studied within Arizona. Constructing a passenger rail line between Phoenix and Tucson would



Figure 1 Existing Railroads



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Railroads

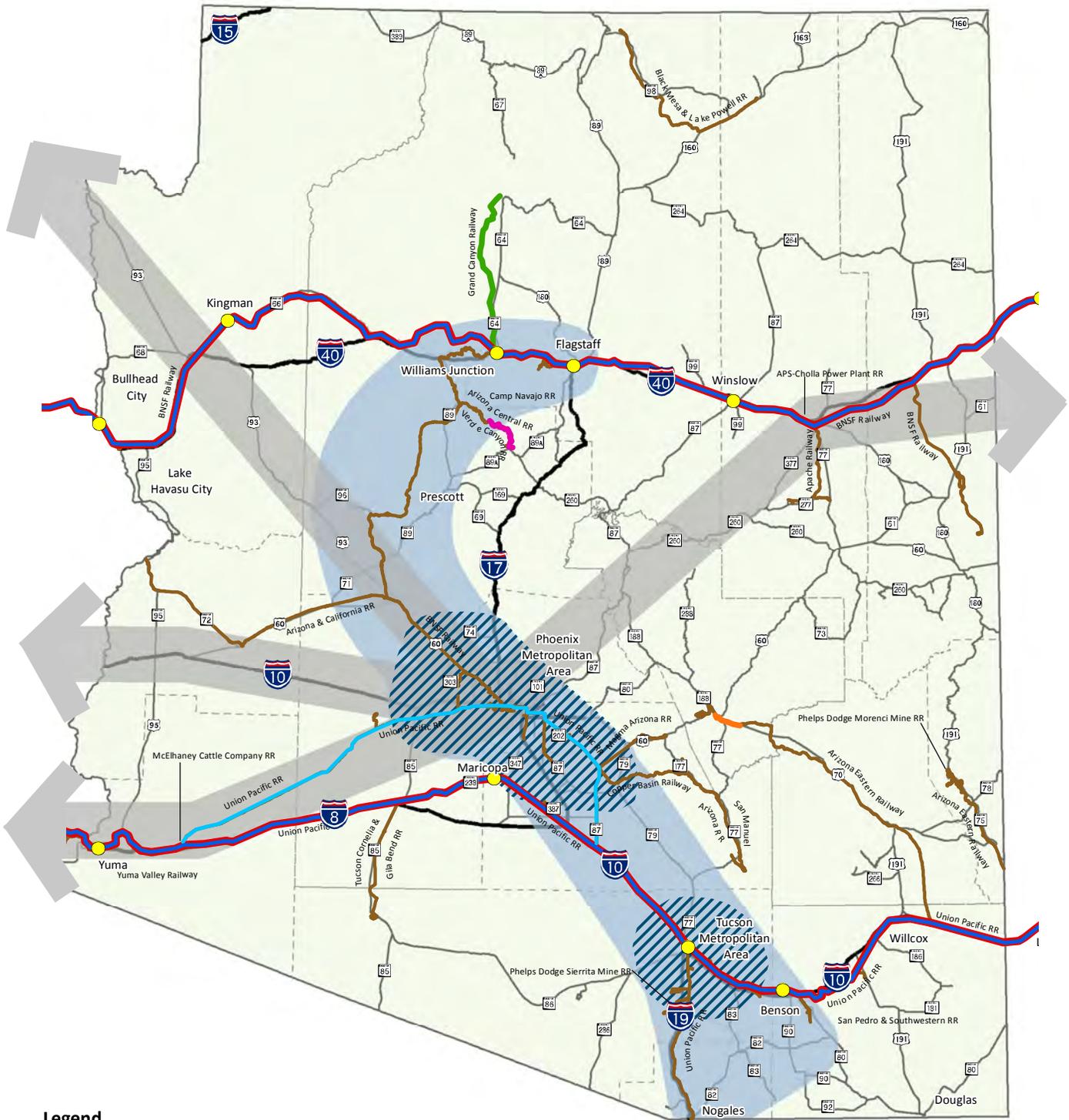
- Apache Railway
- Arizona & California RR
- Arizona Central RR
- Arizona Eastern Railway
- Black Mesa & Lake Powell RR
- BNSF Railway
- Copper Basin Railway
- Copper Spike RR
- Grand Canyon Railway
- Magma Arizona RR
- Phelps Dodge Morenci RR
- San Manuel Arizona RR
- San Pedro & Southwestern RR
- Tucson Cornelia & Gila Bend RR
- Union Pacific RR
- Yuma Valley Railway

Freight Railroad Facilities (Classification Yards, etc.)

- ▲ Existing Railroad Facilities
- ▲ Proposed Railroad Facilities

Note: While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the Project Team makes no warranty, expressed or implied, as to its accuracy and expressly disclaims liability for the accuracy thereof.

Figure 2 Existing and Future Passenger Rail Options



Legend

Amtrak Route

- Amtrak Route
- Former Amtrak Route
- Freight Railroad
- Amtrak Stations

Arizona Tourist Railroads

- Copper Spike Railroad
- Grand Canyon Railway
- Verde Canyon Railroad

Potential Passenger Rail

- Commuter Rail
- Intercity Rail
- ← Potential Southwest Interstate High-Speed Rail Corridor

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serve the greatest demand, even though many hurdles exist before implementation could begin, such as securing a funding source and potentially developing an agreement with UP for shared use of its corridors. The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and Pima Association of Governments (PAG) are studying potential future commuter rail in their regions. High-speed rail (HSR) corridors could someday connect Phoenix with Los Angeles, San Diego, Las Vegas, and the Front Range Megapolitan (Albuquerque/Denver). Figure 2 illustrates passenger rail proposals in the state, as well as regional economic development areas which, as potential future employment centers, could eventually be served by intercity rail. HSR corridors are designated by a wide swath, in which an alignment may be designated in the future after appropriate planning, design, and environmental studies are complete and approved.

Anticipated Network Growth

Freight Rail

The relationship between trucking and rail has been a story of evolving common interests as the economic challenges presented by rising fuel costs force greater coordination between the systems. Major motor carriers describe themselves as “mode-neutral,” because they employ any form of transportation (truck, rail) that can effectively meet the service and cost requirements of their customers. For economic and competitive reasons, the rail and trucking industries form partnerships to transport merchandise as efficiently as possible. Rail industries have advantages over long distances, where trucking delivers the shipment to its final destination. More than 50 percent of rail traffic in Arizona passes through the state on the way to out-of-state destinations. As the number of trucks on crowded highways grows, Arizona will increasingly benefit by using more environmentally friendly methods of combining rail and truck activities where this is economically efficient.

Increased freight rail investment creates both opportunities and challenges. The challenges include inconveniences to the public (e.g., public safety, traffic congestion, air pollution, noise), while the opportunities are provided through increased economic development. The UP and BNSF railroads wish to modernize their facilities in Arizona for the benefit of freight movements. UP has plans for a new classification yard near Red Rock, along the Sunset Route southeast of Picacho. The BNSF is exploring a similar facility northwest of Phoenix. Both facilities might drive other commercial ventures nearby, such as industrial park development.

Passenger Rail

Strategic system planning, policy, and investment commitments will be necessary for passenger rail programs in Arizona to succeed. When passenger rail corridors are planned and constructed, they help to build an integrated transit system when connections are made with the existing system. However, this often requires coordination with other state, regional, and local agencies to address land use, population growth, and regional planning requirements. To help streamline this process, policies should be in place to begin setting aside right-of-way and restricting development in planned corridors to avoid obstacles to land acquisition in the future.

Intercity rail routes have undergone some high-level conceptual studies between the Tucson and Phoenix metropolitan areas, but will require close relationships and continued interaction with Class I railroads, especially UP. ADOT’s dialogues with these railroads are in the earliest stages. Commuter rail programs in the MAG and PAG regions also depend on a relationship with the Class I railroads. Both intercity and

commuter rail concepts have reached a stage of discussion that is centered upon freight business needs, safety, limited capacity, and other basic issues. Actual negotiations cannot occur until funding becomes available for passenger rail development.

ADOT's Role in Rail Planning

ADOT's current role in rail planning is focused on helping retain or improve rail service in partnership with private railroads and local governments. ADOT currently has four employees assigned to rail issues, but hopes to develop a separate Rail Division. Current responsibilities of ADOT staff include:

- Intergovernmental coordination with cities, towns, counties, Councils of Governments/Metropolitan Planning Organizations (COGs/MPOs), and tribal governments regarding ADOT rail planning and program development
- Liaison to the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Transit Administration regarding federal coordination of state rail funding, systems, corridor planning and program development
- Liaison with U.S. border states and Sonora, Mexico, as well as special interest groups on rail planning, funding, and program development
- Coordination with other state agencies on rail-related issues
- Administration of the state railroad grant process
- Technical development of passenger rail corridor planning
- Project management and administration of state rail planning projects
- Management of the Section 130 program, which funds improvement to at-grade railroad crossings
- Oversight of the state grade crossing inventory and coordination with FRA
- Coordination between railroads and other government agencies

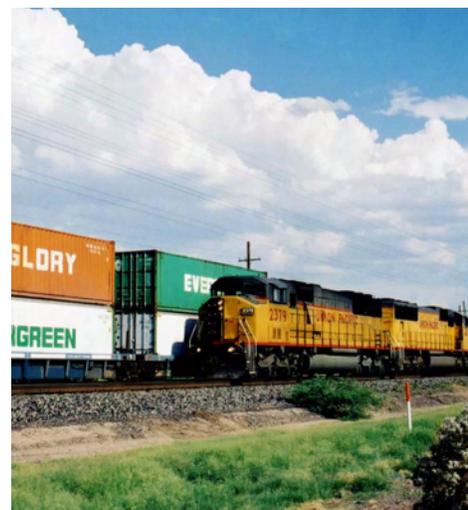


Coordination and Collaboration

A variety of public outreach techniques were used to gather information for the Statewide Rail Framework Study and keep the general public and stakeholders informed of project activities and status. Five types of community and stakeholder involvement were employed (Table 1).

Table 1 Community and Stakeholder Involvement

Rail Technical Advisory Team (RTAT)	The RTAT was a multidisciplinary team, representing rail-related interests, that provided technical input and review on the long-term direction of rail in Arizona. The RTAT provided input for each major task and reviewed each work product. Members of the RTAT included representatives of statewide agencies, regional and local agencies, federal agencies, railroads, interest groups, trade and economic development organizations, and freight users.
Focus Group Meetings	Two focus groups were held in northern and southern Arizona to gain additional input on key issues. These meetings provided another method to garner public input. Groups that received invitations included environmental organizations, economic development organizations, cities, towns, counties, COGs/MPOs, Class I railroads, short line railroads, and special interest groups. A joint workshop was held in central Arizona, coordinated with the MAG Commuter Rail planning efforts, to solicit input from rail-related stakeholders in the heart of the Sun Corridor.





Stakeholder Meetings	A series of stakeholder meetings was conducted to gain more in-depth information from particular groups or agencies. Such stakeholders included: Class I railroads, short line railroads, trucking companies, and state and regional agencies.
Online Survey	An online survey was distributed to gain input from stakeholders that could not be interviewed personally. These surveys were distributed to four groups: private transportation-related companies, economic development agencies, local and regional governments, and state and federal agencies, and achieved an approximate 30 percent response rate.
Border State Consultations	Meetings were conducted with each bordering state to coordinate rail planning efforts as a larger part of the Statewide Transportation Planning Framework process. Border state meetings involved state departments of transportation (DOTs) from California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and Sonora, Mexico; as well as presentations to the Transportation, Infrastructure, and Ports Committee of the Arizona-Mexico Commission.

Strategic Opportunities

A series of strategic opportunities were developed that include recommended programs of action that may consist of modifications to existing rail systems or the establishment of new facilities and services. Five passenger rail and eight freight rail strategic opportunities were identified to serve as the foundation for specific implementation pursuits and actions.

Passenger Rail Strategic Opportunities

High-Speed Interstate Passenger Rail

Overview:

Four potential high-speed rail (HSR) corridors between Arizona and bordering states were identified in the Statewide Rail Framework Study. These corridors could link Phoenix/Tucson with Los Angeles, Las Vegas, San Diego, and the Front Range Megapolitan (Albuquerque/Denver). These cities are within the 100- to 600 mile range in which HSR is competitive with other transportation modes, such as highway and air travel. This network would provide significant public benefits, especially increased mobility via a more sustainable transportation mode.

Purpose:

- Provides an additional option for regional Southwest travel, relieving airports and highways
- Provides an additional mode choice for long-distance travel
- Reinforces the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region as a key economic activity center at the national level
- Becomes part of the national high-speed rail network
- Improves the economic competitiveness of the state by helping to attract jobs, skilled workers, and visitors

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

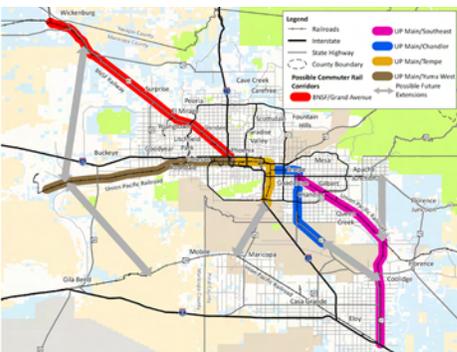
- Pursue Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail corridor as the foundation for future HSR
- Become an active partner with the Western High-Speed Rail Alliance, and with other passenger rail organizations with a regional perspective, to:
 - Study feasibility of a HSR corridor from Phoenix/Tucson to Las Vegas
 - Study feasibility of a HSR corridor from Phoenix/Tucson to Los Angeles
 - Study feasibility of a HSR corridor from Phoenix/Tucson to San Diego
 - Study feasibility of a HSR corridor from Phoenix/Tucson to the Front Range Megapolitan (Albuquerque/Denver)

Phoenix/Tucson Intercity Rail

Overview:

ADOT has recently received FRA grant funding to conduct an Alternatives Analysis (AA)/Environmental Overview (EO) on the Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail (ICR) corridor to evaluate the feasibility of, and determine alternative alignments for, ICR between the two metropolitan areas. Such a corridor would create a high-capacity rail link





MAG Commuter Rail Conceptual Corridors Evaluated

throughout the Megapolitan region, spurring economic development and focused growth. One of the critical aspects of developing a regional passenger rail system is creating seamless connections to local transit options, allowing riders to connect to their final destinations.

Purpose:

- Establishes the base for an integrated transportation system within the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region
- Provides a multimodal choice
- Establishes station locations as economic activity centers and reinforces responsible land use development patterns in both new development and redevelopment areas
- Provides the foundation for future HSR

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Conduct AA and EO/EIS to identify, evaluate, and prioritize alternative alignment options for Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail to achieve a preferred corridor
- Initiate intercity rail corridor as a precursor to HSR

Megapolitan Extensions of the Phoenix/Tucson ICR Corridor

Overview:

Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail has the potential to extend the length of the Megapolitan region, stretching from Nogales/Sierra Vista to Prescott/Flagstaff. Well positioned ICR stations could reinforce existing economic activity centers or become the focus of new economic activity centers in this burgeoning population center. Upon completion of the AA and EO/EIS for the Phoenix/Tucson segment, further studies should be conducted on the potential ICR extensions to determine corridor feasibility. If the extensions are feasible, then completion of environmental documentation and preliminary alignment options should be explored.

Purpose:

- Provides the spine for an integrated transportation system within the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region
- Provides a multimodal choice for Arizona residents
- Establishes station locations as economic activity centers and reinforces responsible land use development patterns in both new development and redevelopment areas
- Provides a possible basis for future high-speed rail

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Study feasibility of an extension of the Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail corridor to the north
- Study feasibility of an extension of the Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail corridor to the south/east

Enhancement of Intercity Rail Passenger Service

Overview:

Enhancement of Amtrak services within Arizona will help provide a foundation for

more intercity passenger rail service and eventual HSR along certain corridors. Short-term service and track improvements can help the state fully take advantage of its existing passenger rail assets, and long-term improvements would provide significant public benefits by fostering the creation of a passenger rail network. Investing in enhanced Amtrak services would provide additional mobility options and attract more riders within the state.

Purpose:

- Provides an alternate transportation option for long-distance interstate travel
- Establishes station locations as key economic activity centers and reinforces responsible land use development patterns in both new development and redevelopment areas
- Better uses existing Arizona rail infrastructure for passenger service
- Provides the foundation for future high-speed rail, intercity rail or commuter rail services

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Pursue general Amtrak improvements
- Support Sunset Limited/Texas Eagle schedule enhancements and major capital improvements
- Support Southwest Chief major capital improvements

Incorporation of MAG and PAG Commuter Rail Planning

Overview:

Both MAG and PAG have identified a set of potential commuter rail corridors in their regions. Implementation of the MAG corridors would create a commuter rail system in Maricopa County, complementing the more localized light rail and bus system. Similarly, a PAG commuter rail system would complement the Tucson modern streetcar and bus system. To have a truly interconnected passenger rail network in the Sun Corridor Megapolitan, links must be made between the different modes, specifically intercity rail, as well as seamless connections to local transit options, allowing riders to make connections to their final destinations.

Purpose:

- Provides the foundation for an integrated transportation system within the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region
- Provides a multimodal choice for commuters
- Establishes station locations as local economic activity centers and reinforces responsible land use development patterns in both new development and redevelopment areas
- Provides a foundation for future ICR between Phoenix and Tucson
- Ensures compatibility between systems to allow evolution of future ICR

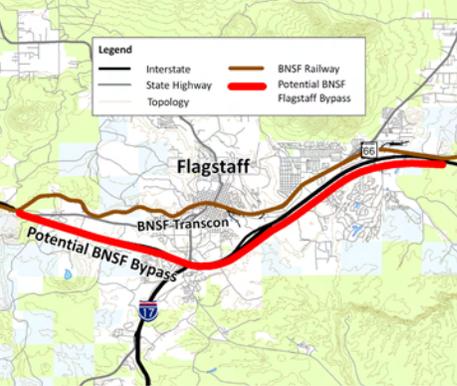
Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Support and coordinate with MAG commuter rail recommendations (BNSF/Grand Avenue corridor, UP/Yuma West corridor, East Valley corridor, potential extensions)
- Support and coordinate with PAG commuter rail recommendations
- Coordinate MAG and PAG commuter rail planning with the pending ADOT intercity rail AA and EO/EIS study efforts



PAG Commuter Rail Conceptual Corridors Evaluated





Potential Flagstaff Bypass Option



Freight Rail Strategic Opportunities

BNSF Phoenix Metropolitan Area Development and Operations

Overview:

The BNSF Phoenix Subdivision, or “Peavine” corridor, branches off the BNSF Transcon at Williams Junction and travels south into the Phoenix metropolitan area along US 60/Grand Avenue. The Peavine may provide a crucial link in a future statewide passenger rail system. Not only might it provide a leg of the proposed MAG commuter rail system within Maricopa County, but it could also be used to develop a northern extension of intercity rail beyond the central Sun Corridor Megapolitan region. The Peavine corridor and Mobest Yard are currently underutilized infrastructure. BNSF has proposed constructing a new classification yard outside the Phoenix metropolitan area. Recognizing that changes to ownership and/or use of the line for passenger rail could make the line more profitable provides an incentive to the railroad for this potential future relocation. Moving the Mobest Yard outside of central Phoenix could also make the line safer by reducing shuttle freight activity within the corridor along Grand Avenue, and thereby, reducing conflicts around at-grade crossings.

Purpose:

- Allows for establishment of an integrated transportation system within a portion of the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region
- Fosters focused economic opportunities around freight-related facilities (e.g., classification yards)
- Allows for commuter rail along the BNSF/Grand Avenue corridor, establishing station locations as key economic activity centers
- Provides the foundation for future ICR to the northern portion of the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region and potentially for HSR to California and Nevada
- Achieves highest and best use of rail infrastructure and adjacent railroad and private properties
- Relieves local railroad congestion and improves traffic safety

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Work to gain access to the Peavine corridor
- Relocate BNSF classification activities out of the Phoenix metropolitan area core
- Construct safety improvements along the Peavine corridor
- Pursue commuter rail on the southern portion of the Peavine corridor
- Pursue ICR and/or possibly HSR along the entire Peavine corridor to northern Arizona

BNSF Statewide Development and Operations

Overview:

The BNSF Transcon is a major artery in the statewide rail system that can be improved to alleviate congestion on the rails and highways. This corridor primarily provides long-haul intermodal and carload service, most of which travels through Arizona between California and destinations to the east. Double-tracking of the BNSF Transcon is complete in Arizona. Handling 120 trains per day at its peak in 2008, the Transcon in Arizona was nearing its capacity. BNSF has begun triple-tracking through New Mexico and, when traffic levels recover, this will add traffic to the Arizona segment.

Purpose:

- Fosters focused economic opportunities along the railroad around freight-related facilities
- Achieves highest and best use of rail infrastructure and related properties
- Relieves railroad congestion in communities and improves traffic safety
- Captures a larger portion of the domestic freight market on rail
- Preserves right-of-way for future bypasses, once appropriate studies have established the need and preferred alignment
- Helps strengthen short line railroad development

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Facilitate BNSF Transcon capacity improvements (e.g., Flagstaff bypass)
- Implement safety improvements along the BNSF Transcon
- Determine infrastructure solutions for heavy freight traffic through local communities along the BNSF Transcon
- Facilitate coordination with environmental interests to mitigate habitat fragmentation and enable wildlife migration

UP Tucson Metropolitan Area Development and Operations

Overview:

Like the BNSF Transcon, the UP Sunset Route is a major artery in the statewide rail system. This corridor travels through central Tucson, frequently interrupting local traffic. UP has proposed constructing a new classification yard at Red Rock to alleviate some of the congestion in downtown Tucson and approaching rail corridors. This, and other improvements, can improve local circulation patterns and provide opportunities for increased economic development.

Purpose:

- Helps develop an integrated transportation system in the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region
- Focuses economic opportunities along the railroad around freight-related facilities
- Allows for commuter rail to be established in the Tucson metropolitan area
- Provides the foundation for future intercity rail to Phoenix and elsewhere north and south
- Achieves highest and best use of rail infrastructure and adjacent railroad and private properties
- Relieves railroad congestion and improves highway safety

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Facilitate UP Sunset Route capacity improvements (e.g., Red Rock)
- Explore and prioritize options for improving freight train movements through and around Tucson (e.g., Tucson bypass)
- Construct safety improvements along UP Sunset Route

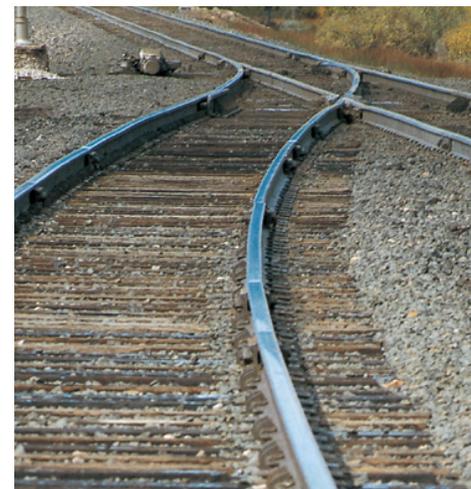
UP Statewide Development and Operations

Overview:

UP carries significant volumes of freight on its Sunset Route and several branches of it within in the state. Many opportunities exist to take advantage of freight-



Potential Nogales Bypass Options





related economic development along the mainline and branch routes, including the possible relocation of classification activities out of central Phoenix to an expanded site in Buckeye, which, in conjunction with other strategic opportunities, could work to create a western freight bypass of the Phoenix metropolitan area. Additionally, improvements to other UP branch segments could allow for new shared freight/passenger rail opportunities statewide.

Purpose:

- Helps focus economic opportunities around freight-related facilities, such as classification yards
- Achieves highest and best use of rail infrastructure and related properties
- Relieves railroad congestion in communities and improves automotive safety
- Captures a larger portion of the domestic freight market on rail
- Preserves right-of-way for future bypasses, once appropriate studies have established the need and preferred alignment
- Helps strengthen short line railroad development

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Facilitate UP capacity improvements (e.g., double-tracking, new Buckeye Yard development near airport)
- Study feasibility of a freight bypass around Nogales
- Explore opportunity to reopen Wellton Branch for shared freight and passenger service
- Monitor at-grade crossings and implement safety improvements
- Facilitate coordination with environmental interests to mitigate habitat fragmentation and enable wildlife migration

Development/Expansion of Mexican Deep-Water Ports

Overview:

Recent cargo volumes moving through the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, along with expensive labor and environmental regulations that limit capacity expansion in California, may provide opportunities for Mexican ports to capitalize on container cargo traffic between Asia and the U.S., which is expected to grow as the global recession eases. If development of deep-water ports in Mexico does occur, Arizona stands to realize many economic benefits. Therefore, this opportunity focuses on monitoring port activity in Mexico so that responsive actions can be taken.

Purpose:

- Captures economic benefit of Asian trade through Mexican deep-water port development
- Focuses industrial and economic development opportunities through inland ports/logistic facility expansion

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Monitor deep-water port opportunities and actions in Mexico
- Continue coordination through the Arizona-Mexico Commission with transportation and freight interests in Mexico
- Engage in partnerships with the private sector (e.g., railroads, industrial developers, etc.) to take advantage of port development/enhancement activities that will benefit Arizona

Development/Expansion of Inland Ports

Overview:

Freight rail can aid economic development through value-adding activities that may include manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, and transloading. One of the most promising avenues for infrastructure investment related to freight rail is the development of intermodal inland ports and associated logistics facilities (e.g., warehouse/distribution), as well as attraction of industrial development that can capitalize on such transportation access. Inland ports allow containerized freight to be shipped directly from the port terminal to an inland facility for trade processing, sorting, and other value-adding services. The ability to develop inland port and logistic facilities in Arizona is ultimately dependent on meeting warehousing/distribution location requirements, particularly in relation to “just-in-time” product delivery needs. Arizona could benefit from facilitating freight-related economic development through the expansion and development of inland ports and associated logistics facilities along Class I and short line railroads or at transportation junctions.

Several initiatives are already underway or completed. The Port of Tucson is a successful, private inland port operating along the UP mainline southeast of Tucson, serving the railroad and local industries. The City of Flagstaff and the Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization undertook the *Northern Arizona Regional Freight Facility Market Analysis* in 2004 to evaluate the potential for development of an inland port/intermodal facility at Camp Navajo, a site just west of Flagstaff; this site has not yet been developed. Last, ADOT and the Department of Commerce have jointly commissioned a study through the Greater Yuma Port Authority to evaluate the potential logistics of an inland port facility outside Yuma, along the UP mainline which will be completed in 2010.

Purpose:

- Creates jobs and supportive industrial development
- Supports increased freight movement destined for Arizona with growing population and changes in the economic base
- Accommodates northbound and southbound NAFTA traffic, and interfaces with major east-west highway and railroad trade corridors

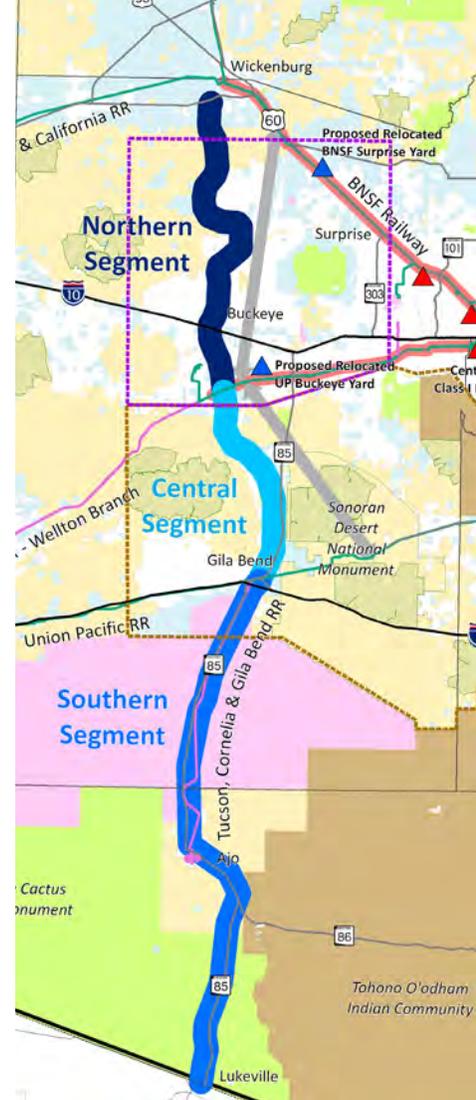
Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Facilitate education and coordination of state agencies and the private sector regarding the economic development benefits of inland ports
- Monitor deep-water port opportunities and actions in Mexico
- Monitor capacity issues and improvements at California ports
- Identify infrastructure improvements that could support inland port development
- Develop incentives and funding mechanisms for inland port development, and jointly promote such development with other public and non-profit entities

New Freight/Passenger Rail Corridor in the Greater Hassayampa Valley

Overview:

Arizona may benefit from constructing a new north-south rail corridor through the state. This corridor could create an additional connection to Mexico, link the BNSF and UP and their ancillary facilities, promote increased economic development



Potential Hassayampa Rail Corridor Segments



opportunities, and serve as a high-capacity transit corridor in the Hassayampa and Hidden Valleys – located in south and west Maricopa County, and western Pinal County. While such a corridor has been proposed only in the Hassayampa and Hidden Valleys (from approximately Surprise to Gila Bend), this corridor could extend farther south to Lukeville within the existing SR 85 right-of-way, providing a new rail connection to Mexico and benefiting Arizona freight mobility. It could also connect into a high-capacity rail corridor parallel to US 93 toward Las Vegas, becoming part of the national CANAMEX corridor.

Purpose:

- Develops a major north-south rail corridor in Arizona, combined with part of the existing BNSF Peavine corridor
- Links two major Class I railroads, connecting potentially relocated classification yards for more efficient interchange service
- Provides a western freight bypass of the Phoenix metropolitan area
- Accommodates future commuter rail services in the Hassayampa and Hidden valleys
- Enables BNSF to reach the UP Sunset Route, and both Class I railroads to potentially reach the Mexican border
- Supports rail-related CANAMEX activities, catalyzing economic development

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Explore the feasibility of constructing a new rail corridor to connect the BNSF Peavine to the UP Wellton Branch
- Explore the feasibility of constructing a new rail corridor to connect the UP Wellton Branch to UP Sunset Route along SR 85
- Explore the feasibility of constructing a new rail corridor to connect the UP Sunset Route to Mexico along SR 85

Development/Expansion of Short Line Railroads

Overview:

Short line railroads are an essential component of a fully-functioning rail network for Arizona. To work most effectively, the rail network needs a healthy balance of major and short line railroads. Class I carriers efficiently transport goods over long distances, but are less efficient for hauling shorter distances on branch lines with less demand. As a result, these railroads have sold off many branches to short lines. Short lines can often foster community and economic development in places that may be less economical for larger carriers to serve. In some cases, short lines may also be more open to sharing rail corridors with passenger service. Arizona may benefit from preserving short line railroad right-of-way for freight and/or passenger use, and from increased economic development opportunities through the development of a funding assistance program for short line railroads.

Purpose:

- Expands industrial and economic development opportunities along short lines
- Supports manufacturing, mining, and other new industries located away from the major Class I railroads
- Supports Class I railroad switching/blocking activities; could potentially serve as distribution link between Class I railroads and inland port facilities
- Allows for potential passenger rail along short lines

Strategic Opportunity Elements:

- Develop a qualitative and quantitative inventory of short line railroad infrastructure (e.g., track, bridges, yards, signal systems, etc.) in Arizona
- Preserve out-of-service right-of-way for the state's future passenger rail system
- Preserve out-of-service short line right-of-way through rail banking (purchasing, and therefore preventing rail lines from being abandoned or removed)
- Attract industry to existing short lines
- Monitor legislation for state or federal funding opportunities



Implementation Pursuits

ADOT (or another responsible state agency) can embark on a series of actions to take advantage of the thirteen strategic opportunities identified. These actions are grouped into six key pursuits, recommended for implementation either immediately (by 2010), in the near-term (2010 to 2015), or in the long-term (2015 to 2050). While these recommendations are designed to be mutually reinforcing, they are also independent in their focus on different elements of the existing and envisioned statewide rail system. Each pursuit contains implementation actions designed to take advantage of one or more strategic opportunities. Refer to the *Statewide Rail Framework Study Final Report* for full documentation of action items. These pursuits and implementation actions will be incorporated into the larger Statewide Transportation Planning Framework program recommendations to form a comprehensive and multimodal long-range vision and action plan for the state.

Passenger Rail Pursuits

Passenger rail will provide an important alternative mode of transportation as Arizona's population and employment more than double over the next 40 years. It will provide improved connectivity between activity centers, thereby allowing efficient movement of people and goods throughout the state, stimulating future economic development. The following pursuits and actions lay the foundation for implementation of an integrated high-speed, intercity, and commuter rail system, with connections throughout the state and the southwestern U.S.

P1. Implement an integrated passenger rail corridor as a multimodal spine to create and support focused growth and sustainable development within the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region.

Growth of the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region will lead to increased transportation demand for both passengers and goods. It will not be possible to solve congestion by improving either roadways or rail alone. Constructing a passenger rail corridor that traverses the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region, starting with a Phoenix to Tucson link, will provide an alternative transportation option, improve regional connectivity, support focused growth, and reduce impact to the environment by using existing rail corridors and clean technologies.

P2. Pursue an integrated high-speed rail network in the southwestern U.S.

A Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail corridor will serve as the foundation for eventual high-speed rail. It will show the state's commitment to passenger rail and prove the practicality of intercity rail between the two major metropolitan areas – thereby encouraging the federal government and bordering states to integrate Arizona into a southwestern high-speed rail network.

Freight Rail Pursuits

Freight service in Arizona is currently provided by two Class I railroads, UP and BNSF, and fourteen short line railroads. Currently, investment by the freight railroads is





constrained by the economic downturn. Steps that can be taken to improve these conditions are identified in the following four pursuits.

F1. Facilitate freight railroad investments statewide by laying the groundwork for public sector participation.

Railroads are important assets to the state. To integrate private railroads in public infrastructure plans, the state should establish a unified communication structure between public entities and private railroad companies, keep a comprehensive inventory of railroad assets, determine the appropriate level of public investment, and partner with the railroads to plan and implement projects of public and private benefit.

F2. Relocate freight rail operations out of the central metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Tucson to improve safety and facilitate transportation efficiency.

There are more than 450 public at-grade railroad crossings in the Phoenix metropolitan area, and approximately 100 in the Tucson area. Both areas have experienced numerous accidents due to growing numbers of both rail and automotive vehicles, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists. Reducing rail freight traffic in the central metropolitan areas can enhance traffic safety, decrease air pollution, and conserve energy. Additionally, removing freight traffic to areas where higher speeds can be achieved and less backtracking is required to switch and block freight cars can improve efficiency on the rails and roadways.

F3. Facilitate expansion of transcontinental railroad routes and other Class I facilities, while minimizing impacts on adjacent communities.

Both the UP and BNSF are expanding their transcontinental routes to achieve greater freight capacity. Throughout Arizona, these routes traverse many communities, causing traffic delays and safety problems. Mitigation measures as part of railroad improvements can improve safety and circulation for communities, and in some cases, increase the efficiency of railroads.

F4. Use railroad and related investments to stimulate economic development in Arizona.

Improvements to railroad infrastructure can spur economic development, by better serving businesses that locate near the railroad and helping to attract additional business for the railroad. Ancillary railroad facilities such as deep-water ports or inland ports provide opportunities to serve railroad customers while increasing local job growth and clustering auxiliary industries.

Rail Organization/Governance Pursuits

To effectively carry out and coordinate passenger and freight rail programs in partnership with public and private organizations, Arizona would benefit from establishing an effective governance structure. This could be carried out in several forms. ADOT, as the state DOT, could be the lead agency. Under this model, rail planning, development, oversight, safety and other programs for passenger and freight rail could be consolidated in a single office of ADOT. Alternatively, a separate

statewide rail authority could be developed to plan and develop statewide rail projects. The authority would be governed by an elected or appointed board, would be empowered to take full control of rail projects under its purview, and would interact directly with the stakeholders. The authority might have its own staff, or use state DOT personnel to perform technical analyses, conduct day-to-day operations, and carry out the policy directives of the Board of Directors. Or, a hybrid organization could be formed. For example, instead of being wholly housed in the state DOT or through an independent organization, a separate entity could be formed and staffed with ADOT employees.

G1. Develop a rail organization with a statewide perspective to promote rail interests.

Development of a statewide rail organization (within or outside ADOT) can benefit the state by furthering economically beneficial rail interests, pursuing funding for strategic rail investments, and partnering with other state agencies, regional entities, and railroads to develop a comprehensive freight and passenger rail system. The purview of the organization would be statewide, but the agency could coordinate and collaborate with multi-state and metropolitan rail organizations to implement a cohesive rail system throughout Arizona.

Implementation Action Timeframes

Table 2 includes each rail pursuit and abbreviated descriptions of each implementation action in a matrix format which proposes implementation timeframes for each action. The timeframes are immediate (2010), near-term (2010-2015), and long-term (2015-2050). Actions are highlighted in yellow for the beginning and continuation of the implementation item. The immediate actions generally consist of initiatives that are already underway, or those that ADOT can take with no new funding or legislative authorization. Many of the longer-term measures are not achievable with currently available resources. Some recommendations can be initiated immediately or in the near term, but will need to continue through 2050 and beyond as the state rail system matures.



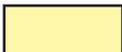
Table 2 Implementation Action Timeframes

Implementation Action		Immediate (2010)	Near-Term (2010-2015)	Long-Term (2015-2050)
Passenger Rail Pursuits				
P1	Implement an integrated passenger rail corridor as a multimodal spine to create and support focused growth and sustainable development in the Sun Corridor Megapolitan region.			
P1(a)	Complete a State Rail Plan			
P1(b)	Establish Statewide Passenger Rail Advisory Committee			
P1(c)	Initiate Alternatives Analysis/environmental document for the Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail corridor			
P1(d)	Complete Alternatives Analysis/Environmental Impact Statement for the initial Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail corridor			

Implementation Action		Immediate (2010)	Near-Term (2010-2015)	Long-Term (2015-2050)
P1(e)	Study the feasibility of including ICR as part of the Pinal North-South Freeway Corridor Design Concept Report			
P1(f)	Draft and adopt new ADOT policy on multimodal corridor evaluation			
P1(g)	Promote a rail culture within state agencies and key stakeholders			
P1(h)	Negotiate agreements with stakeholders regarding intercity rail			
P1(i)	Work with MAG regarding coordinated commuter rail planning and ICR planning			
P1(j)	Coordinate with other regional planning entities regarding intercity rail			
P1(k)	Determine administration and governance of intercity rail system			
P1(l)	Examine system and design implications of intercity rail and high-speed rail			
P1(m)	Work to gain access to BNSF Peavine corridor			
P1(n)	Partner with BNSF to conduct infrastructure improvements on BNSF Peavine			
P1(o)	Explore the feasibility of partnering with Amtrak as a potential intercity rail operator			
P1(p)	Determine dedicated state funding source for rail construction and operations			
P1(q)	Pursue all opportunities for federal funding for intercity rail			
P1(r)	Plan for and implement transit-oriented development at rail access points			
P1(s)	Construct Phoenix/Tucson intercity rail			
P1(t)	Work with UP regarding planning a southern intercity rail extension			
P1(u)	Work with BNSF regarding planning a northern intercity rail extension			
P1(v)	Construct Phoenix/Tucson ICR megapolitan extensions (if feasible)			
P2	Pursue an integrated high-speed network in the southwestern U.S.			
P2(a)	Participate in regional and national high-speed rail organizations			
P2(b)	Build support for intercity passenger rail improvements			
P2(c)	Collaborate with business community to build high-speed rail support			
P2(d)	Work with bordering states to federally designate high-speed rail in Arizona			
P2(e)	Work with bordering states to plan high-speed rail in Arizona and adjacent states			

Implementation Action		Immediate (2010)	Near-Term (2010-2015)	Long-Term (2015-2050)
P2(f)	Work towards future implementation of high-speed in Arizona, linked into the southwestern U.S. network			
Freight Rail Pursuits				
F1	Facilitate freight railroad investments statewide by laying the groundwork for public sector participation.			
F1(a)	Build better relationships with Class I railroads to coordinate investments, projects and programs that will benefit both the public and the railroads			
F1(b)	Establish a state funding source for strategic freight rail investments			
F1(c)	Adopt new ADOT policy to ensure project continuity			
F1(d)	Update state railroad asset inventory			
F2	Relocate freight rail operations out of the central metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Tucson to improve safety and facilitate transportation efficiency.			
F2(a)	Initiate discussions with BNSF to relocate Mobest Yard			
F2(b)	Work with UP to continue dialogue within state government in regard to the proposed classification yard at Red Rock			
F2(c)	Study feasibility of a UP bypass around Tucson			
F2(d)	Explore opportunity with UP for rehabilitation and reopening of Wellton Branch			
F2(e)	Facilitate development of new Hassayampa rail corridor			
F2(f)	Initiate Hassayampa Freeway Alternatives Analysis/ Environmental Impact Statement; with rail as a considered mode			
F3	Facilitate continuing expansion of transcontinental railroad routes and other Class I facilities, while minimizing impacts on adjacent communities.			
F3(a)	Include studying the potential feasibility of a Flagstaff rail bypass in the I-40 Design Concept Report, working with BNSF			
F3(b)	Plan and accommodate rail corridor enhancements			
F3(c)	Work with Class I railroads to close at-grade railroad crossings			
F3(d)	Study feasibility of a rail bypass around Nogales, working with UP and the Mexican federal and state transportation agencies			
F3(e)	Collaborate with the Arizona Game and Fish Department regarding wildlife mitigation measures			
F4	Use railroad and related investments to stimulate economic development in Arizona.			
F4(a)	Monitor Mexican deep-water port opportunities that can benefit Arizona			

Implementation Action		Immediate (2010)	Near-Term (2010-2015)	Long-Term (2015-2050)
F4(b)	Monitor project-specific opportunities for port access, and partner with sponsors to implement			
F4(c)	Preserve abandoned rail corridors; deny future abandonments			
F4(d)	Develop a short line assistance program for strategic rail investments			
F4(e)	Maintain opportunity for shared use or purchase of Wellton Branch			
F4(f)	Formulate a plan to make use of inland port economic development			
F4(g)	Monitor inland port development opportunities			
Governance Pursuits				
G1	Develop a rail organization with a statewide perspective to promote rail interests.			
G1(a)	Define rail organizational needs for the state			
G1(b)	Work with state agencies to define organization and governance model			
G1(c)	Recommend appropriate statewide organizational/governance structure			
G1(d)	Apply governance model to a project or program; assess performance			
G1(e)	Implement statewide rail governance structure			

 Initiation and continuation of action item

Next Steps

The implementation pursuits and actions from the Statewide Rail Framework Study are incorporated into the final Statewide Transportation Planning Framework recommendations. From there, two planning processes will take the next steps in identifying specific projects and funding for the future – the state’s Long Range Transportation Plan and the State Rail Plan.

Long Range Transportation Plan

The recommendations from the Statewide Transportation Planning Framework Program provide a “fiscally unconstrained” vision for 2050 – meaning that the recommendations are not tied to available funding, but encompass all the capacity-related transportation investments needed for a connected and functional transportation system. “What Moves You Arizona,” the long-range transportation planning process, will take the input and recommendations from the Statewide Frameworks Program and match projects to a time line with available funding. This plan will use performance measures to evaluate recommended projects and determine investment strategies to fund them. The plan will be updated every five years with estimates of available funding for the following 20 years.

State Rail Plan

A State Rail Plan addresses current and future needs for passenger and/or freight rail investment at a statewide level. With the recent enactment of the Passenger Rail Infrastructure Investment Act in October 2008, the nation is experiencing a surge in statewide rail planning as DOTs mobilize to become eligible for federal funding. To obtain funding for such projects as intercity and high-speed rail planning and design, states are required to have a FRA-approved state rail plan. With the Statewide Rail Framework Study providing the foundation, ADOT has embarked on developing its first Arizona State Rail Plan, to be published spring 2010.



A series of reports documents the full progress of the Statewide Rail Framework Study. For access to these project documents, please see <http://www.bqaz.gov>



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