

**JOINT MAG-ADOT RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE
CANAMEX CORRIDOR
THROUGH THE MARICOPA REGION**

**Maricopa Association of Governments
Arizona Department of Transportation**

Draft October 2000

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While the CANAMEX Corridor has been defined in federal legislation as a national trade route extending from Canada to Mexico, the exact location of the route through the Maricopa region has yet to be specified. To address this issue, a joint study by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) was undertaken. Following public, agency and other stakeholder consultation on the results and initial recommendations of the study, this draft joint agency recommendation has been developed. This draft joint recommendation addresses requests received during consultation for more study for the northern section of the route and to move forward as soon as possible towards designation of the Corridor through the Maricopa region.

At this point in the study process, it is recommended that the following segments be a part of the future designated route for the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region: I-8 between I-10 and SR 85, SR 85 between I-8 and I-10, and the US 93 / US 60 Wickenburg Bypass. No specific designation for the connection from the SR 85/I-10 junction to the Wickenburg Bypass is being recommended at this time, pending further study of alternatives. It is additionally recommended that the connection between the SR 85/I-10 junction and the Wickenburg Bypass be located outside of the designated air quality nonattainment area for particulate matter under ten microns in diameter (PM-10) as specified in the "Revised MAG 1999 Serious Area Particulate Plan for PM-10 for the Maricopa County Nonattainment Area" (February 2000).

Once additional study has been completed and a recommendation developed for the connection, and the recommendation approved by the MAG Regional Council and the State Transportation Board, the recommendation for the entire CANAMEX Corridor within the Maricopa region will be brought forward for federal designation. The alternative routes for the connection outside of the nonattainment area are presently Maricopa County facilities. The Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has indicated interest in participating in the study of these alternatives, including Eagle Eye Road.

The recommendation eliminates Loops 303 and 101 as well as other urban routes from further consideration for the connection, as they lie within the PM-10 nonattainment area. The recommendation for designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region is not intended, however, to preclude commercial or other traffic from using any other route within or through the urban area.

Figure 1 shows the recommended future designation for the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region. The air quality nonattainment area for PM-10 is also marked in Figure 1. The current nonattainment areas for carbon monoxide and ozone are contained within the area for PM-10. The recommendation is consistent with a 1992 MAG Regional Council decision to divert traffic outside of the urbanized portion of the air quality nonattainment area.

Highlights of the joint recommendation include a bypass route in the Wickenburg area and an upgrade of SR 85 between Gila Bend (junction with I-8) and Buckeye (junction with I-10) to four-lane freeway

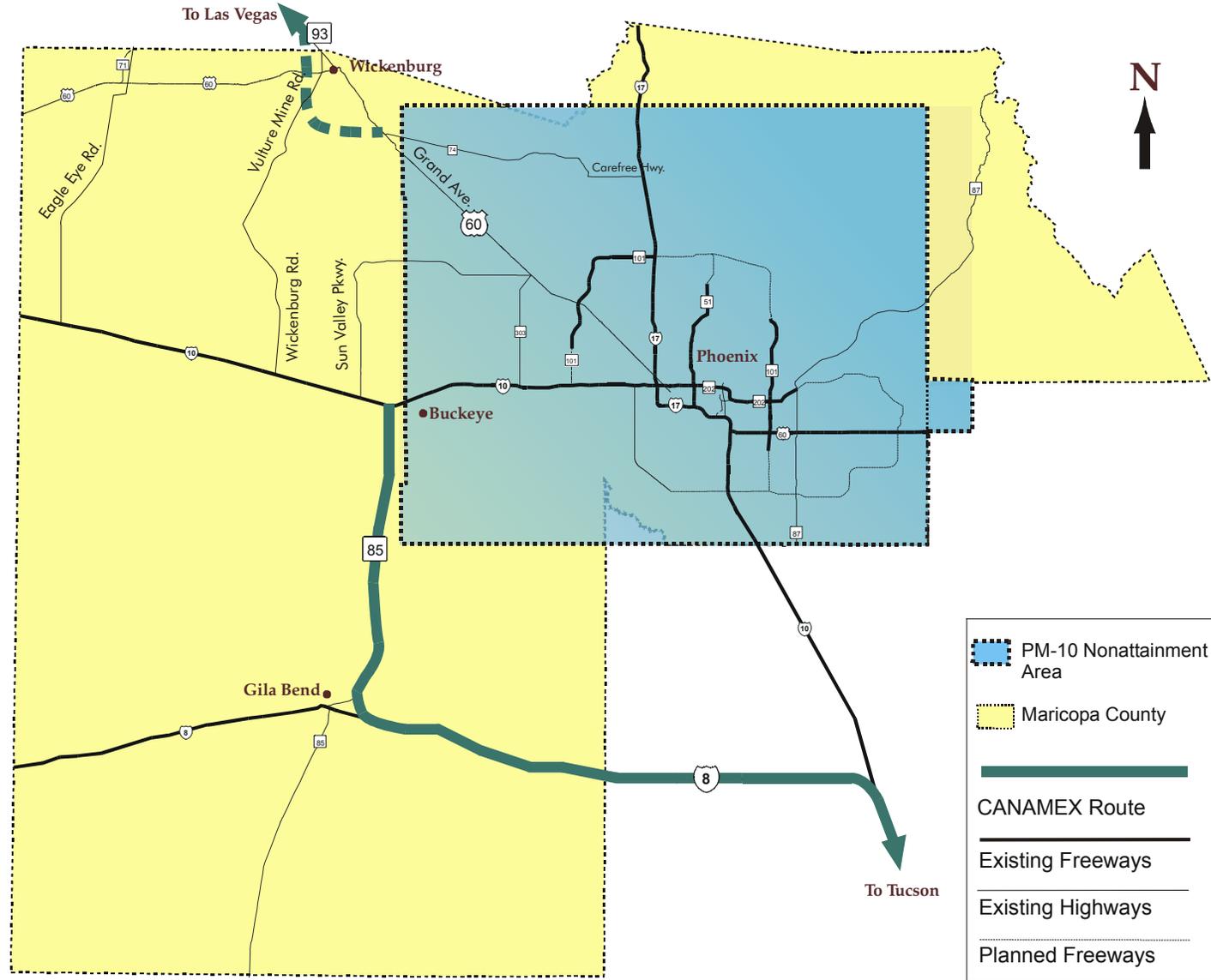


Figure 1: Future Designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa Region

standards. The bypass route improves safety and reduces air quality impacts that otherwise would be expected to occur within the urban area. The recommendation is intended to remove any uncertainty regarding CANAMEX designation for both the portions of the corridor that are recommended for designation and the alternatives that are eliminated. The recommendation would improve the prospects for federal funding for the CANAMEX Corridor to be awarded for improvements to SR 85 and for the Wickenburg Bypass.

The joint recommendation also allows for the completion of other ongoing studies identified in the course of this project that may have a bearing on the final recommendation for the northern section of the CANAMEX Corridor. These studies, all of which are scheduled for completion in 2001, include the Multi-State CANAMEX Corridor Plan, US 93 (Wickenburg-Kingman) Highway Location/Design Concept Report, Maricopa County Transportation System Plan Update, and the Access Management Study for SR 74.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Feedback on the initial draft recommendation indicated that it would be advantageous, at least for the northern section of the Corridor through the Maricopa region, to delay the final recommendation until related studies are completed and their findings known. Additionally, the Citizen's Growth Management Initiative, if passed, could also affect overall planning in the region. The final recommendation for the designation of the northern section of the CANAMEX Corridor would benefit from additional study and coordination with agencies and other stakeholders, some of whom provided comment late in the process.

Related Studies in Progress

Related studies in progress are listed in Table 1 below. Recommendations from these studies are expected within the next calendar year.

Table 1: Related Studies in Progress

<u>Study</u>	<u>Draft Due</u>	<u>CANAMEX Impact</u>
CANAMEX Multi-State Corridor Study (Draft Final Report)	Feb. 2001	General design features and elements of the Corridor
Location/Design Concept Report (US 93 - Wickenburg-Kingman Highway)	Fall 2001	Wickenburg bypass. Interchanges with SR 71, SR 89, US 60 and SR 74.
Access Management Study (SR 74)	Fall 2001	SR 74 connection to US 60.
Maricopa County Transportation System Plan Update ¹	2001	May address portions of CANAMEX alternatives.

¹ Maricopa County, 1997, "Maricopa County 2020, Eye to the Future. Transportation System Plan", December. An extension to the existing Sun Valley Parkway to connect to US 60 is part of this 1997 County Plan. The planned extension by the County largely follows the same alignment of the route specified in the draft MAG-ADOT initial joint recommendation for the CANAMEX Corridor. Eagle Eye Road and Wickenburg Road/Vulture Mine Road are also identified as primary roads in the County Plan.

The region traversed by the CANAMEX Corridor includes Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho and Montana in the United States; the Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Queretero, Estado de Mexico, and the Federal District; and the Canadian province of Alberta. At a general level, the Multi-State CANAMEX Corridor Plan will address the following:

- Identification of current multi-modal transportation infrastructure, existing needs and projected deficits.
- Evaluation of opportunities for improvements in transportation and communications infrastructure as well as processes and policies.
- Analysis of current and future trade flows along the entire CANAMEX Corridor.
- Identification of the major trends that will affect the economics of the CANAMEX region into the next century.
- Evaluation of the potential use of emerging technologies that facilitate the movement of goods, people and information.
- Identification of all financing options for CANAMEX projects.
- Development of a comprehensive report that tied together other work done in the region with the original analysis undertaken in this study.

Implementation of any recommendations from the multi-state CANAMEX Corridor study may be addressed in the final recommendation for the segment within the Maricopa region.

Future development adjacent to SR-74 could result in the proliferation of driveways and intersections along the route, causing increased congestion and reducing traffic capacity. Early and coordinated action to control the amount of access to the facility will be essential to maintain a safe and efficient route, as well as provide the capability to meet growth in traffic demand. In order to address these needs, ADOT in cooperation with other State, regional and local agencies along the corridor is pursuing an access management study for State Route 74.

The ADOT Location/Design Concept Report (LDCR) for US 93 will determine the optimum location and design concept for improving the Wickenburg-Kingman Highway from approximately milepost (MP) 161 on US 93, southerly to approximately MP 120 to US 60. Integral to the study is the development of an Environmental Assessment. The 48-mile corridor begins just south of the Santa Maria River in Yavapai County, crosses into Maricopa County, passes through the Town of Wickenburg, and extends to the US 60/SR 74 junction, just north of Morristown on US 60.

The ADOT Location/Design Concept Report (LDCR) for US 93 will address the issue of a bypass around downtown Wickenburg as well as intersections/interchanges with SR 71, SR 89, US 60 and possibly SR 74. The expected recommendation as of September 2000 is for the “far west” or ultimate alignment. This alignment is expected to be proposed by the Arizona Department of Transportation for addition to the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan 2002 Update. The final DCR due late 2001 will provide the complete technical analysis supporting this recommendation.

Agency and Stakeholder Feedback

A summary of the overall study process was presented along with an initial draft joint recommendation at a Stakeholder Forum held on July 24, 2000. Comments received primarily addressed the

recommendation for a proposed Sun Valley Parkway link between I-10 and US 93. The comments were mostly from landowners and developers with interests in land in the vicinity of the Sun Valley Parkway, and representatives of the Town of Buckeye. At this Forum, the Maricopa County representative from the Board of Supervisors suggested study of Eagle Eye Road as an alternative. Another suggestion was to use Wickenburg Road and Vulture Mine Road to connect to US 93. Although it was not part of the recommendation, comments were also received regarding the use of Loop 303. Representatives of the City of Surprise and of the Sun City communities expressed concerns regarding Loop 303.

On August 11, 2000, staff from MAG and ADOT met with staff from the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS), which had not previously submitted comments. DPS staff raised a concern about safety issues associated with increased truck traffic on congested routes east of the White Tank Mountains. DPS staff therefore requested that any recommendation for this segment of the CANAMEX Corridor be limited to alternatives west of the White Tank Mountains.

Since the July 24, 2000 Forum, approximately 60 letters and email have been received opposing the inclusion of the Sun Valley Parkway in the draft joint recommendation for the CANAMEX Corridor. On August 15, 2000, the Council of Town of Buckeye, including the Mayor, unanimously passed a resolution to “oppose the use of the Sun Valley Parkway as a heavy international truck route as part of the Canamex Corridor”.

Other comments received since the July Forum supported the recommendation. Opposition to designating Loop 303 as part of the Corridor was reiterated. This is in addition to the more than 200 letters and email received in the course of the project and prior to the July Forum. Statements made by developers opposing the designation of the Sun Valley Parkway regarding the study process were challenged, both at the July Forum and in communications since.

Additional agency and public feedback was obtained in public open houses and meetings held August 31 in Sun City West, September 5 in Buckeye and September 7, 2000 in Wickenburg. The joint MAG-ADOT recommendation considered at these events was for specifying I-8 and SR 85 as leading candidates for the southern segment of the CANAMEX Corridor, but not designating a route or leading candidates for a route for the northern segment of the corridor pending completion of the related studies noted above.

The attendance at the open houses and public meetings was approximately 600 in Sun City West, and 50 in each of Buckeye and Wickenburg. Many of the comments received at these meetings reiterated ones previously made opposing consideration of Loop 303 and the Sun Valley Parkway for designation of the CANAMEX Corridor. Support for designating either the Sun Valley Parkway or Wickenburg Road/Vulture Mine Road, linking to the Wickenburg Bypass, was received at the public meeting in Wickenburg.

Other comments received at the open houses and public meetings included a desire to make a designation for the entire corridor without delay, to remove uncertainties and to draw truck traffic away from Loop 303. There was also some public comment at the Wickenburg meeting supporting further consideration of Eagle Eye Road. Copies of the transcripts and written comments are available for review from MAG or ADOT.

A presentation was made to the Governor's CANAMEX Task Force on September 14, 2000. After considering the results of the study and comments received during consultation, the Task Force unanimously passed two resolutions:

- (1) Be it resolved that the CANAMEX Task Force recommend that Loops 101 and 303 be eliminated from further consideration for designation as part of the CANAMEX Corridor through Maricopa County.

and

- (2) Be it resolved that the CANAMEX Task Force recommend that the future CANAMEX designation through Maricopa County shall include I-8 from I-10 to SR 85, SR 85 from I-8 to I-10, and the route commonly referred to as the "ultimate Wickenburg Bypass" as defined by the ADOT Design Concept Report that is currently underway, and that all future connecting routes within Maricopa County be located outside of the air quality nonattainment area as defined in the MAG 1999 Serious Area Plan for PM-10.