SR 85 at Gila Bend

Final Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

NH-085-B(AOM) 085 MA 123 H6407 01C

February 2010
Federal Highway Administration
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR

Project: NH-085-B(AOM)
085 MA 123 H6407 01C
State Route 85 at Gila Bend

The Federal Highway Administration has determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human or natural environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the attached Environmental Assessment Final Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation which has been independently evaluated by the Federal Highway Administration and determined to adequately discuss the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed project. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The Federal Highway Administration takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope and content of the attached Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation.

February 18, 2010
Date

[Signature]
for Division Administrator
Mr. Thor Anderson  
Manager, Environmental Planning Group  
Arizona Department of Transportation  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Mr. Anderson,

We have reviewed the Final Environmental Documentation submitted with your letter of February 10, 2010 for the above-referenced project, and concur with your recommendation for a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The original signed copy of the “FONSI” determination and a copy of the final Environmental Documentation are enclosed for your use.

The adoption of this document constitutes FHWA’s location approval.

Sincerely Yours,

Mary E. Frye  
Environmental Program Specialist

Enclosure
Final Environmental Assessment

Section 4(f) Evaluation

for

SR 85 at Gila Bend

Maricopa County, Arizona
NH-085-B(AOM)
085 MA 123 H6407 01C

Approved by: THOR ANDERSON
Manager, Environmental Planning Group
Arizona Department of Transportation

Approved by: ROBERT E. MOLLIS
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

On: 2-10-10
On: 2-18-2010

This environmental assessment has been prepared in accordance with provisions and requirements of Chapter 1, Title 23 USC, 23 CFR Part 771, and 23 CFR Part 774 relating to the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADOT   Arizona Department of Transportation
ASLD   Arizona State Land Department
B-8    Business Route 8
CFR    Code of Federal Regulations
DCR    Design Concept Report
DEA    Draft Environmental Assessment
EPG    Environmental Planning Group
FEA    Final Environmental Assessment
FHWA   Federal Highway Administration
FONSI  Finding of No Significant Impact
HPT    Historic Preservation Team
I-8    Interstate 8
MOA    Memorandum of Agreement
NEPA   National Environmental Policy Act
SHPO   State Historic Preservation Office
SR 85  State Route 85
TI     traffic interchange
US     United States
I. INTRODUCTION

The Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the State Route 85 (SR 85) project was completed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on September 4, 2009. The DEA evaluated the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the implementation of this project proposed by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). A public hearing was held on October 28, 2009, to obtain comments from the public on the proposed project and on the contents of the DEA.

The public comment period for the DEA began on October 1, 2009, and ended on November 6, 2009. Comments on the DEA were received by letter, on written comment sheets at the public hearing, and through comments taken and transcribed by the court reporter in attendance at the hearing.

The purpose of this Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) is to respond to any comments received during the 30-day comment period and to provide additions and changes to the DEA where necessary. This FEA, which should be used in conjunction with the DEA, includes

- A list of mitigation measures to be included in the final design specifications,
- Additions/corrections from the DEA
- Transcript of the public hearing
- ADOT responses to public and agency comments received during the comment period.

With the completion of this FEA and with the issuance of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by FHWA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements have been met.
II. MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures were presented in the Draft Environmental Assessment and are listed here in their final version. Any mitigation measures that have been added since the Draft Environmental Assessment are italicized for easier reference. These mitigation measures will be implemented by the Arizona Department of Transportation by incorporating them into the project construction documents. These mitigation measures supercede any of those identified in the Draft Environmental Assessment. The following mitigation measures and commitments are not subject to modification without the prior written approval of the Federal Highway Administration.

Arizona Department of Transportation Design Responsibilities

1. During final design, the Arizona Department of Transportation will coordinate the access road relocation with Arizona State Land Department for the residential area north of State Route 85.

2. During final design, the Arizona Department of Transportation will confirm that the roadway design will meet the Federal Aviation Regulation 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 77 surfaces requirements for the Gila Bend Municipal Airport, Runway 04.

3. A Notice of Construction or Alteration (Federal Aviation Administration Form 7460) will be filed if any of the improvements will penetrate the Notice Surface or any of the Federal Aviation Regulation 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 77 Surfaces.

4. During final design, the Arizona Department of Transportation will coordinate with the Federal Aviation Administration and the manager of Airport Development Services (602-553-8817) at Gila Bend Municipal Airport and provide the office with an opportunity to review and comment on the design plans.

5. During final design, appropriate mitigation measures, including testing and data recovery plans, will be developed and implemented by the Arizona Department of Transportation Environmental Planning Group Historic Preservation Team, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and other consulting parties, for those National Register of Historic Places-eligible properties and cultural resources that require testing to determine eligibility that cannot be avoided. The Memorandum of Agreement has been executed for this project and stipulates a process for review of all cultural resources documentation generated from any future archeological investigations. Construction activities will not occur in areas requiring testing and data recovery until cultural resources investigations are complete.

6. During final design, the Project Manager will contact the Department Noise Coordinator (602-712-7767) to arrange for qualified personnel to review and update the noise analysis.

7. During final design, if noise abatement measures are recommended, the Arizona Department of Transportation will meet with each property owner whose site meets the criteria for abatement by the
Arizona Department of Transportation Noise Abatement Policy, to reach an agreement on appropriate noise abatement.

8. The Arizona Department of Transportation will continue coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad Company during design to confirm the design meets the required vertical and horizontal clearances.

9. The Department will prepare and submit an application to the US Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit for the project. No work will occur within jurisdictional Waters of the United States until the appropriate Clean Water Act Section 401 and 404 permit is obtained.

10. The Town of Gila Bend floodplain administrator (928-683-2255) and the Maricopa County floodplain administrator (602-506-0538) will be provided an opportunity to review and comment on the design plans.

11. All disturbed soils that will not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction will be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.

12. During final design, the Arizona Department of Transportation Environmental Planning Group will reevaluate the listing status of the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl and initiate consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, if necessary.

13. The Arizona Department of Transportation will complete testing for asbestos and lead-based paints and, if necessary, recommend remediation measures during final design.

14. The Department project manager will contact the Department Hazardous Materials Coordinator (602-712-7767) thirty days prior to bid advertisement to determine the need for additional site assessment.

15. Access for driveways not permitted will be evaluated during final design.

16. The need for signs along SR 85 referencing the services located in Gila Bend and distance to the next services will be evaluated during final design.

**Arizona Department of Transportation Roadside Development Section Responsibilities**

1. Protected native plants within the project limits will be impacted by this project; therefore, the Arizona Department of Transportation Roadside Development Section will determine if the Arizona Department of Agriculture notification is needed. If notification is needed, the Arizona Department of Transportation Roadside Development Section will send the notification at least 60 calendar days prior to the start of construction.

**Arizona Department of Transportation Yuma District Responsibilities**

1. No work will occur within jurisdictional Waters of the United States until the appropriate Clean Water Act Section 401 and 404 permits are obtained.

2. The Engineer will submit the Contractors’ Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Notice of Intent and the Notice of Termination to the Environmental Coordinator.
3. The Engineer will review the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants notification received from the Contractor. The Contractor can not start work associated with Arizona Department of Transportation Bridge Number 618 until 10 working days have passed since the submittal of the notification to the regulatory agencies.

**Contractor’s Responsibilities**

1. The Contractor shall coordinate with the Superintendent of the Gila Bend Unified School District (602-258-1445) a minimum of 14 calendar days prior to traffic-disrupting activities to allow for coordination of school bus routes during construction.

2. The Contractor shall coordinate with the Town of Gila Bend Fire Department (928-683-2265) and the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Department (602-876-1000) a minimum of 14 calendar days prior to construction activities to inform them of the construction schedule.

3. At least 14 calendar days prior to construction, the Contractor shall place advance-warning signs at locations designated by the Engineer to notify motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists of construction-related delays.

4. Access to adjacent properties, residential areas along Main Street, and community services shall be maintained throughout construction.

5. The Contractor, after coordination with the Engineer, shall communicate traffic control measures with the public, local officials, and the media prior to and during construction activities. Communication may include, but is not limited to, media alerts, direct mailings to area businesses and property owners, information on freeway variable message signs, and paid newspaper notices.

6. The Contractor, after coordination with the Engineer, shall provide a construction notice to residents and businesses in the general project area at least 2 weeks prior to construction.

7. The Contractor shall contact the Arizona Department of Transportation Environmental Planning Group Historic Preservation Team (602-712-7767) at least 10 business days prior to the start of ground disturbing activities to arrange for a qualified archeologist to flag avoidance areas.

8. The Contractor shall avoid all flagged and/or otherwise designated sensitive resource areas within or adjacent to the project area.

9. No work shall occur within jurisdictional Waters of the United States until the appropriate Clean Water Act Section 401 and 404 permit is obtained.

10. The Contractor, in association with the District shall submit the Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Notice of Intent and the Notice of Termination to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality only after the District has reviewed and approved the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.

11. To prevent the introduction of invasive species, all earth-moving and hauling equipment shall be washed at the Contractor’s storage facility prior to entering the construction site.
12. To prevent invasive species seeds from leaving the site, the Contractor shall inspect all construction equipment and remove all attached plant/vegetation and soil/mud debris prior to leaving the construction site.

13. All disturbed soils that shall not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction shall be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.

14. The Contractor shall employ a biologist to complete a pre-construction survey for burrowing owls 96 hours prior to construction in all suitable habitat that shall be disturbed. The biologist shall possess a burrowing owl survey protocol training certificate issued by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Upon completion of the surveys, the Contractor shall contact the Arizona Department of Transportation Environmental Planning Group at (602-712-7767) to provide survey results.

15. If any burrowing owls are located during preconstruction surveys or construction, the Contractor shall employ a biologist holding a permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to relocate burrowing owls from the project area, as appropriate.

16. If burrowing owls or active burrows are identified during the pre-construction surveys or during construction, no construction activities shall take place within 100 feet of any active burrow until the owls are relocated.

17. The Contractor shall complete a National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants notification for work associated with the Arizona Department of Transportation Bridge Number 618 and submit to the Engineer for review. After Engineer approval, the notification shall be submitted to the Arizona Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials Coordinator (602-712-7767) for a 5 working day review and approval. Upon approval by the Arizona Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials Coordinator the Contractor shall file the notification with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the Maricopa County Air Quality Department at least 10 working days prior to demolition/rehabilitation associated with the Arizona Department of Transportation Bridge Number 618. (see Arizona Department of Transportation policy – SAF – 6.01, February 23, 2004).

18. The Contractor shall not start work associated with the bridge removals until 10 working days have passed since the submittal of the notification to the regulatory agencies.

Standard Specifications included as Mitigation Measures

1. Traffic control would be in accordance with the most current Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, published by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (2003a), and the Arizona Supplement to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Arizona Department of Transportation 2004), including any revisions or additions, and/or associated provisions in the project plans, as determined by the Arizona Department of Transportation Traffic Design Section during design.
2. According to the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 107 Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public, Subsection 05 Archaeological Features (2008 edition), “When archaeological, historical, or paleontological features are encountered or discovered during any activity related to the construction of the project, the contractor shall stop work immediately at that location and shall take all reasonable steps to secure the preservation of those resources and notify the Engineer. The Engineer will direct how to protect the features. The contractor shall not resume work until it is so directed by the Engineer.”

3. According to the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104 Scope of Work, Subsection 08 Prevention of Air and Noise Pollution (2008 edition), “The contractor shall control, reduce, remove or prevent air pollution in all its forms, including air contaminants, in the performance of the contractor’s work. The contractor shall comply with applicable requirements of Arizona Revised Statutes Section 49-401 et seq. (Air Quality) and with the Arizona Administrative Code, Title 18, Chapter 2 (Air Pollution Control).”

4. Fugitive dust generated from construction activities would be controlled in accordance with the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104.08 (2008 edition), special provisions, and local rules or ordinances, including Maricopa County Air Pollution Control Regulation Rule 310 (Fugitive Dust) and Arizona Administrative Code, Title 18, Chapter 2 (Air Pollution Control).

5. According to the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104 Scope of Work, Subsection 08 Prevention of Air and Noise Pollution (2008 edition), “The contractor shall comply with all local sound control and noise level rules, regulations and ordinances which apply to any work performed pursuant to the contract. Each internal combustion engine used for any purpose on the work or related to the work shall be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. No internal combustion engine shall be operated on the work without its muffler being in good working condition.”

6. According to the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104 Scope of Work, Subsection 09 Prevention of Landscape Defacement; Protection of Streams, Lakes, and Reservoirs (2008 edition), “The contractor shall give special attention to the effect of its operations upon the landscape and shall take special care to maintain natural surroundings undamaged.”

7. According to the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104 Scope of Work, Subsection 09 Prevention of Landscape Defacement; Protection of Streams, Lakes, and Reservoirs (2008 edition), “The contractor shall take sufficient precautions, considering various conditions, to prevent pollution of streams, lakes, and reservoirs with fuels, oils, bitumens, calcium chloride, fresh Portland cement, fresh Portland cement concrete, raw
sewage, muddy water, chemicals or other harmful materials. None of these materials shall be discharged into any channels leading to such streams, lakes or reservoirs."

8. According to Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 107 Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public, Subsection 07 Sanitary, Health, and Safety Provisions (2008 edition), “During construction operations, should material be encountered which the contractor believes to be hazardous or contaminated, the contractor shall immediately do the following: (1) stop work and remove workers within the contaminated areas . . . (2) barricade the area and provide traffic controls . . . and (3) notify the Engineer.” The Arizona Department of Transportation Engineer would arrange for proper assessment, treatment, or disposal of those materials. Such locations would be investigated and proper action implemented prior to the continuation of work in that location.

9. According to the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 1001 Material Sources, Subsection 2 General (2008 edition), any material sources required for this project outside of the project area shall be examined for environmental effects, by the contractor, prior to use, through a separate environmental analysis.

10. According to Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 810, Erosion Control and Pollution Prevention, Subsection 1.02, Other-Pollutants Controls (2008 edition), “The work shall include implementing controls to eliminate the discharge of pollutants, such as fuels, lubricants, bitumens, dust palliatives, raw sewage, wash water, and other harmful materials; into storm and other off-site waters. The work shall include the implementation of spill prevention and material management controls and practices to prevent the release or washoff of pollutants. These controls and practices shall be specified in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and shall include storage procedures for chemicals and construction materials, disposal and cleanup procedures, the contractor’s plan for handling of potential pollutants, and other pollution prevention measures as required.”

11. According to the Arizona Department of Transportation’s *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 107, Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public, Subsection 11, Protection and Restoration of Property and Landscape (2008 edition), “Materials removed during construction operations such as trees, stumps, building materials, irrigation and drainage structures, broken concrete, and other similar materials shall not be dumped on either private or public property unless the contractor has obtained written permission from the owner or public agency with jurisdiction over the land. Written permission would not be required, however, when materials are disposed of at an operating, public dumping ground.” The Contractor would dispose of excess waste material and construction debris at a municipal landfill approved under Title D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, construction debris landfill approved under Article 3 of the Arizona Revised Statutes
49-241 (Aquifer Protection Permit) administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, an inert landfill, or at another approved site.
III. ERRATA FROM THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The following pages of errata include additions or alterations to the DEA to clarify, further discuss, or make text corrections. These changes are a result of public and agency comments and are provided below with reference to their pages from the DEA. DEA text to be deleted is shown as strikeout text (strikeout), and additions to the DEA text are italicized.

UNIVERSAL CHANGES TO THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Some changes were made universally to the DEA text. References to “Preferred” Alternative have been changed to “Selected” Alternative, except in sections recounting the public involvement process. References to “would” in connection with the Selected Alternative have been changed to “will.” In addition, all references to “would” in connection with the Contractor’s responsibilities have been changed to “shall.” To provide the relevant context for each edit or change other than the universal edits, the entire original DEA paragraph has been included. At the beginning of each of these paragraphs, the original DEA Section titles are given for the readers’ orientation. Only original DEA paragraphs with nonuniversal edits or changes are reproduced here.

IV. B. Land Ownership, Jurisdiction, and Land Use

[DEA page 43, third paragraph] The Selected Preferred Alternative will convert approximately 14.5 acres of existing commercial and industrial uses and incorporate those land uses into a permanent transportation facility. Five Three residential structures will also be acquired, requiring five three relocations. Private-property owners will be compensated at fair-market value for acquired property, in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, as amended in 1987. The amount of land required for the proposed improvements will be a relatively small percentage of the total private land within or adjacent to the project area. The predominant land uses adjacent to the project area—residential, commercial, public, and vacant or undeveloped—will not be altered by the implementation of this project.

IV. C. 5. Relocations or Displacements

[DEA page 51, first paragraph] Construction of the Selected Preferred Alternative will impact approximately 31 privately owned parcels of land, including 21 separate property owners. Of the 31 privately owned properties, a total of 3 permanent structures (2 barns and 1 shed) and 3 manufactured-home units will be affected. Land leased from ASLD will also be acquired, impacting four additional permanent structures (2 vacant residential buildings and 2 sheds). Five Three relocations will be required for the manufactured-home units on private property and the
residential buildings on ASLD leased property. No business will be relocated, displaced, or closed, although there may be temporary and short-term disruptions to business access during construction.

IV. E. 1. Survey Data

[DEA page 59, third paragraph] The footprint of the Selected Preferred Alternative has been surveyed for cultural resources. Approximately 10 percent of the project area south of I-8 was previously surveyed. Six archaeological surveys and one data recovery project have been completed within the project area and for the area south of I-8 for road improvement and pipeline construction projects. A new survey would be required if a future alignment or project that would connect the proposed SR 85 alignment south of I-8 is identified.

IV. E. 1. Survey Data

[DEA page 59, fourth paragraph, new bullet added and associated consultation in Appendix A] A Cultural Resources Survey of 2.45 Acres of Proposed New Right-of-Way for the State Route 85 and Interstate-8 Traffic Interchange (SR 85 Mileposts 120.51 to 122.96), Gila Bend, Maricopa County, Arizona (ADOT 2010)

IV. E. 3. Agency and State Historic Preservation Office Consultation

[DEA page 61, first paragraph] Consulting parties for this project include SHPO, ASLD, the Hopi Tribe, the Ak-Chin Indian Community, the Tohono O’odham Nation, the Gila River Indian Community, the Colorado River Indian Tribe-Mohave, the Yavapai-Prescott Tribe, and the San Carlos Apache Nation. FHWA and ADOT have determined that the Selected Preferred Alternative will impact eight NRHP-eligible properties. The Arizona Department of Transportation consulted with SHPO in a letter dated September 21, 2007; on September 28, 2007, SHPO concurred that the project will have an adverse effect on eight NRHP-eligible sites or require testing to determine their eligibility and that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) should be prepared and implemented to mitigate the effects of this project on historic properties that cannot be avoided. FHWA and ADOT have prepared a final MOA. During final design, appropriate mitigation measures, including road documentation and testing and data recovery plans, will be developed and implemented by the ADOT Environmental Planning Group (EPG) Historic Preservation Team (HPT), in consultation with SHPO and other consulting parties, for those NRHP-eligible properties and cultural resources that require testing to determine eligibility that cannot be avoided. The Memorandum of Agreement has been executed for this project and stipulates a process for review of all cultural resources documentation generated from any future archeological investigations. Construction activities will not occur in areas requiring testing and data recovery until cultural resources investigations are complete. The
Contractor shall contact the ADOT EPG HPT (602-712-7767) at least 10 business days prior to the start of ground disturbing activities to arrange for a qualified archeologist to flag avoidance areas. The Contractor shall avoid all flagged and/or otherwise designated sensitive resource areas within or adjacent to the project area.

**IV. H Noise Analysis**

[DEA page 78, Figure 20. Sensitive noise-receiver locations, revised receiver numbers]

**IV. J. Visual Resources**

[DEA page 86, last paragraph] The magnitude of the change in visual character from existing to post-project conditions within the project area will range from minor to major depending on the specific proposed roadway improvement and its location within the corridor. The new six-lane divided highway and the 10 new elevated structures along SR 85 will spatially dominate the landscape from both a highway traveler’s perspective and a nearby resident’s perspective. However, the six-lane divided roadway will not require substantial regrading of the landscape because of the relatively flat terrain. The 10 elevated structures (2 for I-8/SR 85 ramps, 6 for SR 85/Maricopa Road/Pima Street Ts, and 2 for B-8) will range from 22 to 66 feet in height above the natural grade and will create a pattern in the landscape that will be uncharacteristic of a rural community. The addition of recommended noise barriers along SR 85 at the B-8 overpass structure will also create a change in visual character and may impede views from the residential area north (east) to the south, although this wall has been considered in conjunction with the overpass structure at this location. The new intersection at B-8 and Pima Street and the realigned Maricopa Road will create only a minor change in visual character because these improvements will reflect a scale characteristic of the existing rural setting.

**IV. L. Vegetation and Invasive Species**

[DEA page 91, third paragraph] Preliminary field visits indicate that Arizona listed invasive species do occur within the project boundaries (e.g., red brome [Bromus rubens]). The contractor would develop a Noxious and Invasive Plant Species Treatment and Control Plan in accordance with contract documents, Arizona State Law, Arizona Revised Statutes and Executive Orders. The Plan and associated treatments would exclude areas that are not designated for earth disturbance as shown on the project plans. A list of species for control would be obtained from the Department Roadside Development Section. The treatment and control plan would be submitted by the Contractor to the Engineer at least 15 working days prior to ground disturbing activities. The Engineer would submit the Plan to the Department
Figure 20. Sensitive noise-receiver locations
Roadside Development Section for a 10-day review. The Roadside Development Section would develop a list of Noxious and Invasive plant species requiring treatment and control within the project limits for use by the contractor. The Roadside Development Section would review and approve or reject the Noxious and Invasive Plant Species Treatment and Control Plan developed by the contractor within 10 working days of receipt. Once approved the Department Roadside Development Section would return the plan to the Engineer.

V. B. Public Coordination

[DEA page 106, last paragraph] A public hearing will be held on the Draft EA; a copy of the notice is included in Appendix C.

[DEA page 106, new text replaces last paragraph] The agency and public comment period for the DEA began on October 1, 2009, and ended on November 6, 2009. Copies of the DEA were available for review at the Gila Bend Public Library/Community Center, 202 North Euclid Avenue, Gila Bend; the Gila Bend Town Hall, 644 West Pima Street, Gila Bend; the Gila Bend High School, 308 North Martin Avenue, Gila Bend; and on-line at: www.adotenvironmental.com. A public hearing was held on October 28, 2009, at the Gila Bend High School at 308 North Martin Avenue in Gila Bend to obtain comments from the public on the project and on the contents of the DEA. An advertisement announcing the availability of the DEA and the public hearing was placed in the Arizona Republic on September 30, October 2, 3, 7, 9, and 10, 2009, and the Gila Bend Sun on October 1 and 8, 2009.

Thirty-eight people signed in at the public hearing. The hearing began with an open-house format followed by a brief presentation on the Preferred Alternative. In addition, the potential environmental impacts, as described in the DEA, were summarized. The presentation was given by ADOT staff and project consultant representatives (Appendix B. Public Hearing Presentation). Immediately following the presentation, the hearing was opened to the public for a question-and-answer session. At the conclusion of the question-and-answer session, the hearing returned to an open-house format where project representatives were available to explain the Preferred Alternative and answer questions in a one-on-one setting. A copy of the hearing transcript is provided in Appendix C. Questions asked and the responses made during the question-and-answer session of the public hearing are included in the hearing transcript and will not be restated in this section. Comments received during the 30-day review period and those made individually to the court reporter are addressed below and included in Appendix D.

Eleven people submitted written comments to ADOT on the project and the Preferred Alternative. Two individuals expressed concern specifically for the businesses along Pima Street, and three individuals
expressed concern for the overall economy of the town. Of the three commentors, one also expressed preference for using the project money for improvements to the existing infrastructure and improving the historical bridge to link up Maricopa Road, Butterfield, and SR 85 instead of a new road. Two of the three expressed preference for the No Build Alternative. The need for the extension of SR 85 will be for future conditions when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street will necessitate six-lanes through Gila Bend. The project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing four-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the new system interchange. Furthermore, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension directly to I-8. The improvements and approach will not satisfy traffic demand; therefore, it will not meet the needs of the overall mix of the traveling public.

A representative from the US Army Corps of Engineers expressed concern regarding project drainage and washes. Specifically, the individual requested avoidance of jurisdictional washes where possible and spanning the washes when they cannot be avoided and where practicable. Drainage alterations and impacts to jurisdictional washes will be determined during final design and minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

One individual conveyed concern about the number of lanes for traffic on Butterfield Trail, stating that once the SR 85 interchange with I-8 is functional, five lanes along Butterfield Trail would not be necessary. The individual expressed preference for the No Build Alternative and also noted that the plans show no driveway for the Gila Bend Sun or several private residences located nearby. The Design Concept Report (DCR) traffic analysis validates the opinion that five-lanes along Butterfield Trail is not necessary when the SR 85 extension is connected to I-8 with a full system interchange. The widening of Butterfield Trail to five-lanes will be a low cost interim improvement to provide two lanes of traffic in each direction from I-10 to I-8 and may be in place for many years. By the time SR 85 is extended to I-8, it is envisioned the entire area around Butterfield Road will be urbanized. In regards to the driveways, the DCR shows access to permitted driveways. Access for driveways not permitted will be evaluated during final design.

One person expressed concern regarding the impact of the project on private property. This commentor requested an overlay of the proposed route over their specific property to see how the project will affect their area both pre- and post-construction. ADOT has provided a website showing the roadway and right-of-way overlaid on an aerial exhibit that also shows land parcels.
A representative from the Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) requested that the proposed interchange at Watermelon Road should be considered in the assessment of this project. The DCR study did not include the future Watermelon Road traffic interchange. This DCR begins approximately a quarter mile south of the future Watermelon Road traffic interchange (TI) alignment. The current alignment for Watermelon Road TI was approved by FHWA, ADOT, Arizona State Land, and the Maricopa Association of Governments with the approval of the Final Environmental Assessment for State Route 85 – Gila Bend to I-10 in May 2002. Proposals to modify the planned location for the Watermelon TI would need to be addressed during the development of the MCDOT study and any associated environmental evaluation.

One individual submitted general comments expressing gratitude for having the meeting and one individual submitted a comment form although provided no comments or questions.

Three people provided individual comments to the court reporter. One commentor noted that the residents of Gila Bend are relieved that the project does not have the funding for construction, as they think the project will hurt the economy of Gila Bend. Further, the commentor noted that the current traffic count data for Gila Bend was collected in 2003, and that such data should be updated. However, the project is being built for future predictions, not current traffic counts. The second commentor expressed concern for the entrance into the Gila Bend Sun office property. The DCR shows access to permitted driveways. During the final design, the resolution of access for driveways not permitted will be finalized. The third commentor expressed preference that the money for the project be used for improvements to existing roads and bridges in order to allow traffic to continue to flow through the town. This commentor also noted that other small towns in similar situations, such as Ajo and Dateland, were not mentioned at the meeting. The purpose of the extension of SR 85 is, among other factors, to satisfy a future traffic demand, not the current traffic demand. The future traffic demand is projected to be sufficiently high that even after the extension of SR 85 directly to I-8, the volume of traffic along Pima Street will nearly double as compared to today’s volumes. Implementing the Selected Alternative is not anticipated to have a long-term negative impact on Gila Bend’s economy. Ajo and Dateland do not provide comparable services to the Town of Gila Bend and were therefore not mentioned. Two of the commentors also expressed the need for a sign informing motorists of the services offered in Gila Bend and the distance to the next services on the route. The need for signs along SR 85 referencing the services located in Gila Bend and distance to the next services will be evaluated during final design.
VIII. References

Appendix A. Cultural Consultation
Dr. David Jacobs, Compliance Specialist  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Arizona State Parks  
1300 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RE: TRACS No. 085 MA 123 H6407 01C  
SR 85 at Gila Bend  
Initial Section 106 Consultation  
Geotechnical Investigations  
"no adverse effect"

Dear Dr. Jacobs:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) are planning to reconstruct the State Route 85 (SR 85) and Interstate 8 traffic interchange at Gila Bend in Maricopa County. At this time, pre-construction geotechnical investigations are necessary for the project to proceed. As this project is qualified for federal funding, it is considered an undertaking subject to Section 106 review. The geotechnical investigations would occur on Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)-owned land and easements across State Trust land administered by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), and private land. Consulting parties for the geotechnical aspect of this project include FHWA, ADOT, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and ASLD. Due to the limited scope and nature of the geotechnical investigations, Tribal consultation will not be conducted.

The geotechnical component for this project would involve excavating 49 bore holes. The area of potential effects (APE) for these geotechnical investigations consists of the existing and proposed new ADOT right-of-way along SR 85 between milepost (MP) 120.51 and MP 122.96, along I-8 between MP 117.60 and MP 118.19, and a 375 foot (ft.) long (east-west) by 150 ft. parcel and adjacent parcel measuring 100 ft. long (east-west) by 225 ft. The APE is located within the southeast quarter (SE ¼) of the SE ¼ of Section 29 and the north half of Section 32, Township 5 South, Range 4 West, Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian (Gila Bend [1983] USGS 7.5 map). Geotechnical testing plans are enclosed to assist you in your review.
Most of the APE was previously surveyed for cultural resources by Archaeological Research Services, Inc., the results of which are reported in "Cultural Resources Survey of Approximately 40 Miles of Proposed State Route 85 Right-of-Way (and Associated Alternative Routes) Between Gila Bend and Buckeye, Southwestern Maricopa County, Arizona" (Harmon and Beyer 1994). ADOT previously consulted on the eligibility recommendations and the adequacy of the report (Rosenberg [ADOT] to Garrison [SHPO] March 22, 1995) and based on comments, a revised report was submitted (Gasser [ADOT] to Heathington [SHPO] December 18, 1995. One historic property, AZ FF:9:17 (ASM), the historic alignment of US 80, was identified within the current APE a result of the survey. Site AZ FF:9:17 (ASM) is part of the Historic State Highway System (HSHS) and, in accordance with the Interim Procedures for Treatment of Historic Roads (November 15, 2002), is considered eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under Criterion D. The geotechnical investigations proposed for this project would alter the historic fabric of the roadway. Such alteration is a normal and ongoing aspect of road maintenance and one that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for the treatment of historic properties (36 CFR §68). Thus, this component of the HSHS would not be adversely affected by this project.

Logan Simpson Design Inc. recently surveyed the 375 foot (ft.) long (east-west) by 150 ft. parcel and adjacent parcel measuring 100 ft. long (east-west) by 225 ft. of proposed new right-of-way north of SR 85 within the APE between MP 120.0 and MP 124.5. The results of the survey are reported in "A Cultural Resources Survey of 2.45 Acres of Proposed New Right-of-Way for the State Route 85 and Interstate-8 Traffic Interchange (SR 85 Mileposts 120.51 to 122.96), Gila Bend, Maricopa County, Arizona"[Rowe 2009]. No historic properties were identified as a result of the survey. A copy of the report is enclosed for your review and comment.

Based on the above, ADOT has determined that a finding of "no adverse effect" is appropriate for the geotechnical investigations. Please review the enclosed geotechnical testing plans, survey report, and the information provided in this letter. If you find the report adequate and agree with ADOT's determination of project effect for the geotechnical component of this undertaking, please indicate your concurrence by signing below. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me (602) 712-8636 or by e-mail at ldavis2@azdot.gov.

Sincerely,

Linda Davis
Historic Preservation Specialist
Environmental Planning Group
1611 W. Jackson Street, MD EM02
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213
Jacobs
085 MA 123 H6407 01C
January 6, 2010
Page 3 of 3

Signature for SHPO Concurrence

Enclosures

cc: MFrye
LDavis (EM02)

7 JAN10

Date
Steve Ross, Cultural Resources Manager
Arizona State Land Department
1616 West Adams
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RE: TRACS No. 085 MA 123 H6407 01C
SR 85 at Gila Bend
Initial Section 106 Consultation
Geotechnical Investigations
"no adverse effect"

Dear Mr. Ross:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) are planning to reconstruct the State Route 85 (SR 85) and Interstate 8 traffic interchange at Gila Bend in Maricopa County. At this time, pre-construction geotechnical investigations are necessary for the project to proceed. As this project is qualified for federal funding, it is considered an undertaking subject to Section 106 review. The geotechnical investigations would occur on Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)-owned land and easements across State Trust land administered by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), and private land. Consulting parties for the geotechnical aspect of this project include FHWA, ADOT, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and ASLD. Due to the limited scope and nature of the geotechnical investigations, Tribal consultation will not be conducted.

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Sincerely,

Linda Davis
Historic Preservation Specialist
Environmental Planning Group
1611 W. Jackson Street, MD EM02
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213
Ross
085 MA 123 H6407 01C
January 6, 2010
Page 3 of 3

Signature for ASLD Concurrence

Date

Enclosures

c: Ruben Ojeda, R/W Section Manager, ASLD, 1616 W. Adams, Phoenix, AZ, 85007
MFrye
LDavis (EM02)
Appendix B. Public Hearing Presentation
Welcome!

Goals for today’s hearing:

- Project Background
- Preferred Alternative
- Draft Environmental Assessment
- Next Steps
- Obtain Your Input
- Corridor Update
Your Input is Important to Us!

Questions and comments may be submitted at today’s hearing in the following ways:

- Speak in front of the audience during the question answer session which follows this presentation
  - Comments limited to three minutes to allow ample opportunity for all wishing to speak
- Speak one-on-one with the court reporter
- Fill out a yellow comment form and return it to the registration table

Questions and Comments

Comments may also be submitted to:

Michael Daehler
ADOT Environmental Planning Group
c/o Patricia McCabe
Logan Simpson Design Inc.
51 West Third Street, Suite 450
Tempe, Arizona 85281
Fax: (480) 966-9232
E-mail: pmccabe@lsdaz.com

Please submit comments no later than November 6, 2009
Project Background

- SR 85 (I-10 to I-8) Environmental Assessment Finding of No Significant Impact issued June 3, 2002

- SR 85 from I-10 to Watermelon Road Construction Schedule

---

Project Purpose and Need

- Provide a 6-lane fully access-controlled divided highway with traffic service interchanges from MP 123 to a system interchange at I-8.

- Improve roadway operations and geometry at the existing SR 85/B-8 traffic service interchange.

- Improve the intersection of Maricopa Road and SR 85 to provide for truck turn movements.

- Accommodate free-flowing traffic according to the goal of the proposed CANAMEX route.
**Preferred Alternative**

- Future Watermelon Road Tl (by others)
- New SR 85/Maricopa Road traffic service interchange
- Maricopa Road and airport frontage road connection
- B-8 overpass over SR 85 mainline
- Widen B-8
- Main Street realignment
- Cul-de-sac
- New SR 85/I-8 system interchange
- Auxiliary lanes
- Widen/reconstruct Sand Tank Wash bridge
- New SR 85/B-8 intersection
- New access to Elks Lodge, ADOT maintenance yard, residential area, and rodeo grounds
SR 85/B-8 Intersection

Phase 1

Anticipated Cost:
$20,220,000
Phase 2

Anticipated Cost:
$9,300,000

Phase 3

Anticipated Cost:
$73,400,000
Phase 4

Anticipated Cost:
$171,400,000

Phase 5

Anticipated Cost:
$8,500,000
No Action Alternative

- SR 85, B-8, I-8, and Maricopa Road would remain in their present conditions
- Roadways alignment and design remains the same
- No improvements other than routine maintenance activities, minor improvements, and pavement resurfacing

Draft Environmental Assessment

- Prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Federal Highway Administration is the lead federal agency
- Copies of the Draft EA are available at:
  - Gila Bend Public Library
  - Gila Bend Community Center
  - Town of Gila Bend – Town Hall
  - Gila Bend High School
  - www.adotenvironmental.com
National Environmental Policy Act
Environmental Process

- Evaluates the level of potential environmental impacts of a proposed action
- Provides an opportunity for the public and agencies to provide input and/or comment
- Assists in the decision-making process

Environmental Resources Evaluated

- Land ownership, jurisdiction, land use
- Social and economic resources
- Title VI/Environmental Justice
- Public involvement
- Water resources
- Cultural resources
- Air quality analysis
- Hazardous materials
- Utilities and railroad
- Vegetation and invasive species
- Threatened/endangered species, designated critical habitat, and sensitive species
- Material sources and waste materials
- Section 4(f) resources
- Secondary and cumulative impacts
- Noise analysis
- Visual resources
Section 4(f) Resources

- Gila Bend Canal
- Tucson, Cornelia, and Gila Bend Railroad
- UPRR (Gila Bend to Maricopa line)
- 1934 historic (eastbound) bridge over the UPRR in Gila Bend (Gila Bend Overpass)
- Gila Bend Rodeo Ground
- Recreation & Public Purposes (R&PP) patented land adjacent to the Gila Bend Municipal Airport

Section 4(f) Resources (cont’d)

R&PP patented land adjacent to the Gila Bend Municipal Airport

- 1.6 acres, or 0.25 percent, of the 631 acre R&PP Act patented land - new right-of-way
- Impact was determined de minimis
- Town of Gila Bend and Bureau of Land Management concurred with the findings
Noise

- Receivers identified
- Receivers considered for noise abatement
- Receivers would achieve reduction in noise levels with abatement measures

Visual

Elevated structures
- System Interchange I-8/SR 85 ramps
- Service Interchange SR 85/Maricopa Road/Pima Street TI
- B-8 Grade Separation

Structures vary between 22 and 66 feet high
Visual (cont’d)

Project Schedule – Next Steps

- Incorporate all public and agency comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment
- Prepare Final Environmental Assessment
- Federal Highway Administration will render a decision
Questions?

Questions will be recorded by the court reporter and become part of the project record.

Questions and Comments

Comments may also be submitted to:

Michael Daehler
ADOT Environmental Planning Group
c/o Patricia McCabe
Logan Simpson Design Inc.
51 West Third Street, Suite 450
Tempe, Arizona 85281
Fax: (480) 966-9232
E-mail: pmccabe@lisdaz.com

Please submit comments no later than November 6, 2009
Appendix C. Public Hearing Transcript
PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT

Gila Bend, Arizona
October 21, 2009
6:00 p.m.

PROCEDINGS

MR. PAUL PATANE: Well, first, I want to thank everybody for coming out here tonight. My name is Paul Patane, with the Arizona Department of Transportation. I'm the Yuma District Engineer, and Gila Bend is a part of Yuma District.

But we have on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration, Arizona Department of Administration, along with the Maricopa County Association of Governments. And we welcome you to tonight's public hearing regarding the State Route 85 and Gila Bend Project.

Before we get started, our interpreter, Alicia Jacobs, would like to say a couple things.

(Alicia Jacobs, the interpreter, addresses the audience.)

MR. PAUL PATANE: Before we get started, I want to introduce a couple of the local dignitaries first. I would like to begin with the Town of Gila Bend, Fred Hull, who is the vice mayor.

Also, I would like to introduce the former mayor, Mr. Julius Fox. He is here today, too. So thank you for coming.

The purpose of the hearing is to provide information about the preferred alternatives and the potential impacts, to receive public input on the environmental document. Tonight is about hearing the public concerns and the questions that you may have.

Before we get started, I would like to introduce a few more of the team members that are here today.

First, I would like to begin with, from the Federal Highway Administration, Mary Frye. And some folks from ADOT, from the Roadway Predesign, we have Tim Wilson; and Dave Morrison, who is also here tonight. He is in the back there.

And I would also like to introduce from Yuma District, Bruce Fenske, who is our development engineer out of Yuma. I would also like to introduce, as most of you may know, David Miller, who is our maintenance supervisor in the Gila Bend area.

Also, from our ADOT Environmental Planning Group, we have Michael Daehler. Barney Remington is also from our environmental group. And from our ADOT Communications Community Partnerships, we have Lucy Shipp. Brook Barnhardt is also here. And we have Timothy Tate.

And some of our consultants are here tonight, that could make it; Dave Marcus, Clark Clatanoff, Kim Carroll and Patricia McCabe.

Driver and Nix Court Reporters (602) 266-6525
www.drivernix.com
And also, we have some representatives from Maricopa County Association of Governments; we have Tim Strow. And from MCDOT, we have Lisa Leighton. Lisa is here tonight. And I know there are probably going to be a few right-of-way questions, so we have folks from ADOT right-of-way. We have Pete Mayne, Jim Walcott. And they are hiding in the back, if you want to find them there.

So the goals for tonight’s meeting, we will have some folks come up and give presentations and project backgrounds. We will get into some of the preferred alternatives, and then Patricia will talk a little bit more in detail about the Draft of Environmental Assessment. And we will get into the next steps of the process where we look to choose the preferred alternative. But tonight is really about input from the public, then we will also give you and provide you with an update on the old corridor on State Route 85.

So questions and comments can be done a couple of ways. There is always the written format. I think we have some forms there available for you to write in comments. But you are also more than welcome to come up and speak in front of the audience today. We would like you to try to keep your comments to three minutes or so.

And keep in mind, we do have a court reporter here tonight; Tanis Eastridge is here to join us. We also have comment cards at the front desk.

You can also submit your comments directly in writing, or by e-mail, to Patricia McCabe, and also, Michael Daehler with ADOT.

At this time, I want to introduce Tim Wilson, who can give us a background of the project and give us a little history of where we are today.

MR. TIM WILSON: Thank you, Paul.

There was a study that was completed that was already done quite a while back, and that started back in 1999. But the Finding of No Significant Impact for the Environmental Assessment for the study of I-10 to I-8 was completed back in 2002. And because of that, you see a lot of freeway that has been constructed.

From I-10 south, currently, there are 14 priority segments of construction that you can see on the map in front of you. Most of those have been constructed or are under construction. Two more segments are still remaining.

Number 14, which is Southern Avenue to I-10, that project is supposed to begin construction in late 2009, this year, and should be completed within about one year.

The other segment, Segment Number 10, is Hazen Road to Broadway Road. The design is currently about 30 percent complete, and the construction on that project...
will not be scheduled until funding is available.

So that's somewhat of the projects currently
under way. And today, we are talking tonight on this map,
as indicated by Sections 9, 11 and 12. That's what we
have been working on for the last four to five years.

Purpose and need: I think any of you that have
lived in this area using 85 for a number of years probably
have it pretty engrained your mind what the need of the
project is. Back in 1999, many of the mayors in adjoining
towns were pleading with the Transportation Board to
improve State Route 85 from a two-lane roadway to make it
a four-lane divided roadway, to provide passing
opportunities and to eliminate the high number of
fatalities that were taking place on a monthly basis.
There was strong support at that time, and the project was
accelerated. And that is why you have seen a lot of
construction in the area.

Also, as you know, State Route 85 is a truck
bypass for the Phoenix area, and it typically has
27 percent trucks. So there's a lot of trucks and a lot
of traffic coming down through this area.

And the other need within the study are our
primary two locations. You are familiar with where BA
comes in on Pima Street, it's an old 50's style trumpet
interchange. You can see the trucks using that

interchange. They have a hard time turning left, and it's
an operational problem that needs addressed as soon as
possible.

The other concern is the intersection at Maricopa
Road and State Route 85. There's a lot of traffic on
weekends, Rocky Point traffic. It doesn't handle the
traffic correctly and is a high-accident area. In fact,
in our study area, that location was notified as having 80
percent crashes within our study.

So the purpose of our project is to accommodate
free-flowing traffic, and according to the goal for the
future proposed CANAMEX corridor, which comes down State
Route 85, Interstate 8.

Our study process is identified in front of you.
The top of it is the engineering document and the bottom
is the environmental. We had a public scoping meeting
back in December of 2004 to look at alternative corridors.
And based on those alternative corridors, we went through
and did some more alternative evaluations, had a public
information meeting in February of 2006, in which we
provided alternatives and were discussing various ways to
move the traffic from 85 down to Interstate 8.

The red area is where we are currently located
and having the public hearing tonight. After we have the
hearing to incorporate your comments, we will be
finalizing the environmental documents and the
environmental assessment. We will be completing the
engineering document, which is a design concept report,
and then providing the environmental document to Federal
Highways. What we would look for is obtaining a Finding
of No Significant Impact, to complete the environmental
process. And we hope to do that by February of 2010.

As you can see, the study area to the north is
pretty much bounded by where the future Watermelon Traffic
Interchange would be located, by Mile Post 123. That
location, that interchange, was studied in the earlier
environmental document, and right-of-way was purchased for
that. So that's where it's located, and that where it's
shown, also, as a proposed future Watermelon Interchange.

As you go to the left, you pretty much have a
boundary of the Gila Bend Canal. Also, to the east is the
Gila Bend Airport. Also, we have some adjoining at the
Gila Bend Airport, it’s called Recreation and Public
Purpose Act patented land for park area purposes. That
pretty much is a limit of our trying to minimize our
involvement in that location.

As you go further south, to the east, it would be
the Butterfield Trail Interchange, also known as, we call
it the East Gila Bend Traffic Interchange. That's on
Interstate 8.

To the west would be the West Gila Bend TI,
traffic interchange. Then, as we would go south, by the
Barry M. Goldwater Range, the Department of Defense.

And you might wonder why the study area goes so
far south. Part of the implementation of this project is
to make sure that whatever we are designing now can be
accommodated with whatever might happen into the future.
So with our project, to move the connectivity of State
Route 85 as a free-flowing access-controlled facility,
right down Interstate 8, which would create a partial
post-system interchange to the north.

However, with traffic and the growth in Arizona,
typically, we want to make sure there's no fatal flaws
with the way we would design that interchange, with not
accommodating extending that interchange to the south to
the full system TI, or a full system interchange that's
needed in the future.

So that's why the study went down to Barry
Goldwater, to make sure we don't have any fatal flaws with
creating any problems with that new system interchange,
when we built as it was needed. Thank you.

MR. PAUL PATANE: Clark Clatanoff is going to
talk to you about our preferred alternatives, give you
some of the design details. Thank you.

MR. CLARK CLATANOFF: Also, I wanted to introduce

one more member of the ADOT team from this part of the MAG Region, we have Larry Langer. Larry Langer, from the Valley, is with us tonight.

All right. Moving on to the preferred alternatives. This is where we have landed to-date with the preferred alternative for state relocations and extensions of State Route 85 to I-8.

Starting to the north, you can see as it moves to the west of existing 85. It then crosses existing 85 and the UP Railroad, south and west of the airport. Then, it curves to the southwest, crosses existing B-8, and then has the spaghetti-like ramp tying into I-8, that we call system interchange; that has free-flowing ramps.

There would be one interchange between the beginning of the facility and the end. And that is with the realignment of the road to Maricopa and Pima Streets from downtown. That is in this area. The rest of it will be an access-controlled facility. So Pima Street and Maricopa Road will be realigned. We will continue to provide access to the airport at an intersection about a quarter of a mile to the east. And you can see that on the screen.

The interchange that now has the ramps at B-8 will be redesigned. It is going to be a standard at-grade intersection. But when I say at grade, that means two roadways will connect on embankment or filling that will be roughly 10 to 12 feet further in the air than the existing roadway is. We need to do that in order to get a new railroad bridge over the UP on Business 8, and still come down and reach the low grade to meet the realigned Pima-Maricopa Road.

As you look, there will be a reconstruction of B-8. It is going to cross over the new realigned State Route 85. With that new overpass structure, that is in the vicinity of where Mayne Street intersects B-8 today. That is why you see a realignment of Mayne Street in this area, is to get down at the tie-in on the vertical grade to where it starts to go up and over, future 85 Mayne line.

You can see that we are roughly a mile and a half to the west of Butterfield Road here. In order to accommodate the conflicting on- and off-ramp maneuvers, we use an additional lane between an on-ramp and an off-ramp. The term we use is a recovery lane, but it is an additional lane parallel to the Mayne lines of the freeway or interstate. That is to accommodate the successive on-ramp and off-ramp. It just allows for us to provide for safer and freer flowing movements along an access-controlled facility. I believe those are the Mayne features of the new facility.
The plan also addresses a center left-turn lane and one additional lane in each direction of travel along B-8. And that's an option that may need to be implemented. So we added that in the planning process.

This is the typical section for State Route 85. In brief, it provides nice wide medians, similar to what you would experience if you were on I-8 today. It will accommodate three lanes in each direction of travel with nice wide shoulders on both the median and outside of the road.

Here is the typical section for Maricopa-Pima Road. This is your roadway that is going to connect the downtown street, Pima Street, to the road of Maricopa there, this alignment. It is going to provide a raised median. A short segment of it close to the Gila Bend Canal will have curb on the outside, also.

If you proceed further to the east, it is going to go into this shoulder section that you see there. There will be no curb better on the outside.

This is the section of B-8; you can see it's similar to the previous section, but instead of a raised median, it is going to have a continuous center left-turn lane. That's because there's quite a bit of access to the facility today, and we want to allow that to be managed, but we want to allow that movement where necessary.

This is a little bit more detailed look at the B-8 Intersection. We called it, as I said, it was going to be more of a standard T-intersection. That's what you see in the graphic there. The ramps will be removed. B-8 will come to a T-Intersection with the future realigned Pima Maricopa Road.

This is Phase 1 construction. One of the things to point out is that it will also provide -- there are a couple of properties that when State Route 85 is built, it is going to sever their access. One of those properties is in this area, so you will see some lines going up there; that is right-of-way corridor. Whenever the Department severs right-of-way, we will be responsible for returning access to that parcel. So that's what that piece of right-of-way and future roadway will be, will provide access to this piece of private property in the future. Phasing is done in order to meet the physical restraints and traffic demands in the future.

Phase 1 is going to, as Tim was pointing out, have some areas that are in need of operational improvements. Phase 1 does a very nice job of addressing those operational improvements. It's going to go ahead and provide for the rebuild construction of the Pima-Maricopa link. It is going to provide for the replacement of the existing B-8 Interchange meeting
intersection. It is going to provide for a new bridge over the UP Railroad in order to accommodate the additional number of lanes for B-8. It is going to provide for new access to the State facilities. Because in this area, Pima-Maricopa Road is going to have to be, as I indicated before, some 10 feet in the air. It’s going to not be possible to provide access at its existing location here, to the State facilities. It is going to come from this location.

And on an interim basis, we are going to continue to utilize existing State Route 85 in this area and connect it at this location to the rerouted Pima-Maricopa Road.

Phase Two is a right-of-way acquisition phase. It looks at acquiring a right-of-way south of the railroad tracks, including the directional ramps, the sister ramps at I-8. It also includes everything north of the first projects in this area.

Phase 3 then brings the realigned State Route 85, a new facility from its current location -- or, in this particular case, you don’t see it today, but in the future, this study assumes that the four lanes are already built to a future Watermelon Road Interchange. This project then begins by extending the four lanes down to existing State Route 85, which is actually, at that point in time, the existing Pima-Maricopa Road. And we will provide the ramps.

By doing so, State Route 85 will be taken off the existing State Route 85. It will be a new alignment, and the ramp will serve as access to and from Pima-Maricopa.

Phase 3 also includes the option to wind B-8 to five lanes; two lanes in each direction, plus the center.

Phase 4 continues the extension of State Route 85 between Pima-Maricopa and I-8. This is the big one. This is the longest extension of State Route 85, and it also includes all the directional ramps.

I hadn’t mentioned it, but if you noted, all the costs were on the bottom. All of these slides that you are seeing now are boards in the back. We can look at and talk about them in more detail. If you don’t want to stand up after we get done with our presentation and talk to the public about your questions, if there are more individuals, there are a number of us here that would be more than happy to talk to you individually and take your questions and answer any questions you might have about the cost, if you didn’t doesn’t catch them on the previous slides.

The Phase 4 facility will be complete and in place, fully open to traffic. Phase 5 is the addition of one more lane in each direction of travel. So what it is
doing is, in the median, from the location about here, just to the north of I-8, all the way to the north end of the project, is adding a third lane in each direction of travel, in the median. And that's just to accommodate traffic as traffic volumes occur in the future.

And again, the price on the lower hand, and those are the current dollars.

The No Action Alternative, that is an alternative that is also a consideration through the end of the process. Current action alternative basically suggests that we will utilize the existing facility, provide routine maintenance and improvements as warranted, as the facility pavement wears out and what have you. But it's a No Action Alternative in terms of capacity, improving operations.

At this point, Michael Daehler will be addressing the environmental aspects of the project.

MR. MICHAEL DAELER: My name is Michael Daehler. I am with the Arizona Department of Transportation, Environmental Planning Group. I wanted to go over the Draft Environmental Assessment and the impacts discussed in the EA.

The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act was to make federal agencies take environmental considerations into the decision-making process and look at reasonable alternatives.

The Federal Highway Administration is a situation and a lead federal agency. And copies of the Draft EA are available at the Gila Bend Public Library, the Gila Bend Community Center, the Town of Gila Bend Town Hall, Gila Bend High School, and also can be viewed online at adotenvironmental.com.

The purpose of an EA is to evaluate impacts associated with an action and to determine how significant those impacts are. It provides the public and agency an opportunity to comment, and that's what we are doing here this evening. And, it will assist Federal Highways in making a final decision.

The environmental resources evaluated: All the areas we looked at are listed here. The areas where we have a potential affect, either beneficial or negative, are highlighted in blue, and I will go through each of them. It will take a little bit of time.

Starting off with land ownership, jurisdiction and land use: The preferred alternative would impact approximately 318 acres of ground disturbance. The existing land use in the area, includes: Residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, including railroad...
and highway facilities. There's publicly-owned land, recreation. And south of the project area, we have military with the Barry Goldwater Range. The preferred alternative would require a new right-of-way, and private property owners would be compensated at fair market value for their land.

The next thing is the economic effects: ADOT has studied the impacts of small towns when we relocate a major transportation facility away from a downtown area. A community could be negatively impacted by relocation of a major transportation facility if the community is less than 20 miles from another major population center.

In this situation, the next closest communities are Buckeye at 37 miles, Maricopa at 41 miles, Casa Grande at 60 miles, and the City of Yuma at 115 miles. So after construction, motorists are believed that they will continue to stop at Gila Bend because the surrounding communities with comparable services are too far away.

Neighborhood continuity, social services, access to schools and recreational facilities: Goods and services would continue to move throughout the project, including construction; although, during construction, we might see slight delays. But after construction, there will be a benefit seen due to improved traffic flow throughout project area.

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for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Air quality: There might be a short-term minor impact to air quality as a result of construction. But after construction, there should be a benefit to air quality due to reduced congestion in the area.

Vegetation and invasive species: There are protected native plants within the project area. The Arizona Department of Transportation would coordinate with the Arizona Department of Agriculture in regards to the salvage of those plants. There are no noxious weeds in the area, although there is one species of concern for ADOT, a grass called red brome, which would be addressed accordingly.

Threatened/endangered species, designated critical habitat, and sensitive species: There are no threatened/endangered species in the area that would be impacted. There is no critical habitat in the area.

There is one State and BLM sensitive species that could potentially be impacted, and that is the western burrowing owl. If any western burrowing owls are found in the protect vicinity prior to construction, they would be relocated.

Section 4(f): Section 4(f) refers to Section 4(f) of the 1966 Department of Transportation Act. And the purpose of Section 4(f) was to protect publicly-owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife refuges, and historic properties. Before the Department of Transportation can incorporate any of these properties into a transportation facility, they must make sure that there is no feasible and prudent alternative, and they must take all steps to reduce impacts to those properties.

These are the Section 4(f) properties in the area. They include: Gila Bend Canal, the railroads in the area, a bridge that was constructed over the Union Pacific Railroad in 1934, the Gila Bend Rodeo Grounds, and some Recreation and Public Purpose patent land adjacent to the Gila Bend Municipal Airport. The Recreation and Public Purposes patent land is land that was given to the Town by the BLM for the sole purpose of recreation or a park facility.

As you can see here, the preferred alternative would impact about 1.6 acres, or a quarter of a percent of the 631 acres of the patent land. This take is considered to be minimis. And minimis, meaning the minimum; a legal term that means that it is so small that it's not considered by the law.

The Federal Highway Administration did consult with the Town of Gila Bend and the Bureau of Land Management, and they did concur that it was a minimis take.
Noise: We do have noise receivers in the area, and a noise receiver would be considered a home, a library, a hospital, something that would be noise sensitive. At this location over here, the preferred noise model was done for the area, and looking at ADOT's Noise Abatement Policy, there were some homes in this area where the noise levels could potentially go passed our noise criteria of 64 decibels. So a noise wall is recommended at this location. The height of the structure will be determined during final design.

Visual: There will be some visual changes. We would be constructing a system interchange, a service interchange, and some grade separation. The structure will vary in height, between 22 and 66 feet. Of course, a 6-lane roadway would also be constructed.

And I think Clark wanted to discuss some of the aspects of the visual a little bit more.

MR. CLARK CLATANOFF: Thank you.

As I discussed the preferred alternative, I indicated there was going to be a couple of bridges or grade separations. So I wanted to take a moment to give you a little better idea of how that would look if you were standing at ground level, if you were driving by, or owned a property that was going to be close to one of these bridges or grade separations.

For example, if you are a property owner or you are driving on B-8, what you would be looking at is a picture, like this, where you would see one bridge over the roadway. It’s a single-level grade separation. If, however, you were driving on I-8, or you are a property owner on the north or south side of Interstate 8, we want you to recognize that, in order to build these ramps, that you would be looking at this as your horizon. This would be your visual.

If you are on ground level, you are driving here, the first level is here, the second or the third level, excuse me, would be here. So again, ground level, second level, third level.

In terms of heights, if you are going up one level above ground, you are 22 to 24 feet up in the air; that’s per level. So if you are going two levels up, you are going 22 to 24 feet up in the air, twice. So it's close to 50 feet of grade difference between ground level, or off the road crossing at the bottom, and the highest level, the second level.

If you have any questions and want to discuss this in further detail, I will be glad to discuss this with you afterwards.

MR. MICHAEL DAHLER: Thank you, Clark.

So our next step, we will incorporate all of the
Response to Comment C1-1

Currently, in the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) five-year program, the first phase is programmed for 2010. The Maricopa Association of Government (MAG) is having a meeting to determine, based on the priorities of the MAG system, whether that funding will still be available. There was some discussion that it might be postponed to a later date because of the large cost of all the construction we are considering. Phase 5 is anticipated to be some time out in the future, approximately 2025.

However, this section is very important to ADOT because of the poor traffic operation at the Maricopa Road Intersection and at the interchange of SR 85 with B8 Phase 1. ADOT is completing a contingency plan to look at available funding to maintain the 2010 project and will pursue that funding.
Program, first phase is programmed for 2010. MAG is having a meeting tonight to determine, based on the priorities of the MAG system, whether that funding will still be available. So we won't know until tomorrow how that is going to work out. There was some discussion that it might be postponed to a later date with all the construction of what we are talking about, what they call Phase 5, which would be some time out, 2025.

However, this section is very important to the Department because it operates or concerns Maricopa Road, and at that 50's trumpet interchange with the B. So the Department is doing a contingency plan to look at available funding to maintain our 2010 project being implemented and will pursue that funding. Currently we don't have it, so we are pursuing it and believe that it is available.

MS. LUCY SHIPP: So what does that mean to these folks?

MR. TIM WILSON: It means that there's currently a money program, as we are speaking tonight, in the five-year program, Phase 1. And if tonight at MAG's meeting they pull that funding, the Department is working diligently to find a different funding source besides the MAG funding to implement Phase 1 and maintain the 2010 Fiscal Year construction.
Response to Comment C2-1

The initial environmental studies have been completed and are being presented at this public hearing as a part of the ongoing environmental process. The studies thus far have provided the information leading to the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Once we have received public and stakeholder input on the environmental studies and Preferred Alternative, the Study Team will address the comments received and prepare the final environmental assessment. The final environmental assessment will be reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration. After approval of the final environmental assessment, the Federal Highway Administration will issue a determination on the proposed project, at which point the environmental process would be concluded. Funding would not be procured until after a determination is made.

Response to Comment C2-2

All comments received on the proposed project will be considered and addressed in the final environmental assessment. Minor changes to the engineering details of the Preferred Alternative may result from this process; however, the basic concept and alignment of the Preferred Alternative would remain the same.
Response to Comment C3-1

Phase 1 would consider the operational problems that are the most hazardous, where 80 percent of the accidents occur within the town of Gila Bend.

As far as trying to officially move traffic and make it as operationally efficient as possible, it would be beneficial to build though Phase 3, which would bring SR 85 traffic down to Maricopa Road and would widen B-8 to a five lane section. As provided in the purpose of this project, ADOT is completing this study with a goal to provide two lanes in each direction of travel from I-10 to I-8 until money would be available to complete the system interchange with I-8.

Response to Comment C3-2

This issue will be addressed during final design.

Response to C3-3

Hazardous materials were evaluated in the Draft Environmental Assessment. The presentation focused on resources that would be either negatively or beneficially impacted by the Preferred Alternative and did not discuss hazardous materials because there were no identified long-term impacts.
materials impact, and I only discussed what items we felt
were either beneficial or a negative impact. We had our
hazardous materials looked at on the proposed corridor
closely, and there are no hazardous materials.

MR. CURTIS FOX: Okay. Thank you.

$283 million to save three minutes of travel
time.

MR. TIM WILSON: Phase 1 pretty much takes care
of the operational problems that are the most hazardous,
where 80 percent of the accidents occur within the city;
that is Phase 1.

As far as trying to officially move traffic and
make it as operationally efficient as possible, it would
be beneficial for them to get through Phase 3, which would
bring the 85 traffic down to Maricopa Road and would widen
the 8 to a five-lane section. As provided in the goals
the Department was given if we were doing this study, to
provide two lanes in each direction of travel with I-10
and I-8 until the money would be available for that Phase
4, which is the 121 million or so.

We would hope the funding, sometime in the
future, would become available to build that Phase 3,
because that's the one that pretty much officially
provides service to Gila Bend, brings the 85 traffic down
from I-10 into Gila Bend, and then provide operational
Response to Comment C4-1
Comment is noted in the project record.

Response to Comment C4-2
Comment is noted in the project record.

capacity to move problem Maricopa Road down to B-8, to the
built in traffic interchange until the systems can be
funded and built.

MS. LUCY SHIPP: Who would like to be next;
either a question or a comment? Anyone else?
Yes, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The EM traffic lights.
The EM traffic volume through Gila Bend, the volumes are
showing on 8 through this area, what, 20, 30, up to 46,000
thousand cars a day. So with that type of volume, the
freeway tech facility was justified to do this area.

MS. LUCY SHIPP: Yes, sir.

MR. FRED HULL: My name is Fred Hull. I want to
thank you for coming down to put on this public hearing.
When this first started, the first thing that we have
always talked about was no cars bypassing the Bend, every
car goes down Pima Street, until they told us how many
cars they expected in 90 years, that it would turn Pima
into a parking lot. So we have been involved with this
from day one almost. And we thank you for that
opportunity to take part and work on getting to where we
are at now. So thank you ADOT and staff.

MS. LUCY SHIPP: Thank you. Thank you, very
much.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hardly hear very
well. I'm pretty old, I guess, but I don't think the
other people are hearing very well.

MS. LUCY SHIPP: We will try to do better.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Don't you have a volume
that you can turn? Not there, but on your equipment?

MS. LUCY SHIPP: That, I don't know. Maybe we
just need to speak louder into the microphone. Is that
better?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's better. But any
way, just things go in and out.

MS. LUCY SHIPP: Who else would like to ask a
question? Would anyone else like to address the ADOT
group that's here tonight?

Then you do have a way to contact us. You have
the yellow sheets. You can walk around the room. You can
come up and talk directly to the court reporter and give
her your comments directly, and she will record them
directly this evening.

So that concludes our presentation and we invite
you to stay and look at the story board, have our
refreshments. There are an awful lot of cookies back
there for us to take home. And we thank you very much for
coming this evening.

MR. MICHAEL DAHLER: And just one last reminder,
please have any comments on this to us by November 6th.

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Response to Comment C5-1

Comment is noted in the project record.

Response to Comment C5-2

Comment is noted in the project record.

Response to Comment C5-3

Comment is noted in the project record.

State Route 260 was rerouted around downtown Camp Verde several years ago. According to Camp Verde personnel, the realignment was a benefit to the downtown area of Camp Verde. A downtown enhancement project which created a pedestrian friendly environment, including street lighting and parking; enhancing the overall appearance of the town and stimulating revitalization of existing structures along Main Street was constructed at the same time as the realignment of State Route 260. Signage was also added during construction to aid in identifying the downtown area.
Response to Comment C6-1

The proposed extension of SR 85 is planned to address future traffic demand in the year 2030, among other goals. It is not planned or needed to address existing/current traffic demand. Traffic counts will be collected in 2010 in the vicinity of the B-8 and Maricopa Rd intersections along SR 85 in conjunction with the design for the Phase 1 construction project. In addition, ADOT has collected traffic counts along various mainline segments in the area of this project. The data shows the volumes are relatively the same as in 2003.

Response to Comment C6-2

The Design Concept Report shows access to permitted driveways. During final design the resolution of access for driveways not permitted will be finalized.

Response to Comment C6-3

The need for the proposed extension of SR 85 occurs in the future when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street would necessitate 6-lanes through Gila Bend. Multiple traffic signals would be required to allow access to and from the side streets. The resultant travel time for through traffic would not meet the needs of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT).

This proposed project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing 4-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent for both the Town of Gila Bend and ADOT to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the proposed system interchange.

Further, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension directly to I-8.
Response to Comment C7-1

The need for the proposed extension of SR 85 occurs in the future when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street would necessitate 6-lanes through Gila Bend. Multiple traffic signals would be required to allow access to and from the side streets. The resultant travel time for through traffic would not meet the needs of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT).

This proposed project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing 4-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent for both the Town of Gila Bend and ADOT to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the proposed system interchange.

Further, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension directly to I-8.

Response to Comment C7-2

The purpose of the proposed extension of SR 85 is among other factors, to satisfy a future (2030) traffic demand, not the current traffic demand. The future traffic demand is projected to be sufficiently high that even after the extension of SR 85 directly to I-8, the volume of traffic along Pima Street will nearly double as compared to today's volumes.

Response to Comment C7-3

This issue will be addressed during final design.

Response to Comment C7-4

According to an ADOT study, small towns have been economically affected by the routing of a major transportation facility away from the downtown area if the town is less than 20 miles from a major metropolitan center. Conversely, small
Response to Comment C7-4 (continued)

towns have not been economically affected if the town is more than 20 miles from a major urban area with similar amenities. The closest major urban area is Buckeye located approximately 37 miles north of Gila Bend. Motorists traveling along Maricopa Road would need to travel approximately 41 miles to the town of Maricopa, approximately 60 miles to Casa Grande on I-8 eastbound, or approximately 115 miles to the city of Yuma on I-8 westbound to access comparable services offered in Gila Bend.

Implementing the Preferred Alternative is not anticipated to have a long-term negative impact on Gila Bend’s economy. After construction, motorists would continue to stop in Gila Bend because surrounding towns and cities offering comparable services would be too far away to attract motorists. Through traffic would be removed from the local street network, allowing local residents enhanced accessibility through Gila Bend and to local businesses. Ajo and Dateland do not provide comparable services to the Town of Gila Bend.
Response to Comment C8-1
This issue will be addressed during final design.

Response to Comment C8-2
This issue will be addressed during final design.

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C8-1
are going to go to Maricopa, or are you going to go to Yuma, or are you going to go to Ajo?

MS. HEATHER GOEBEL: I do like the fact that we

tell them to have a sign out that says the next services

am wherever, and what is here. I guess the businesses

have to pay for that sign saying there is.

MR. BRYAN DAVIS: They have got to pay $2,500 a

quarter.

MS. HEATHER GOEBEL: Wow, is it that much?

MR. BRYAN DAVIS: And how many small business are

going to be able to do that?

MS. HEATHER GOEBEL: Thank you again.

MR. CLARK CLATANOFF: If you have any last

questions, or you would like to talk to the court

reporter, we ask that you do that in the next five to

ten minutes. We will allow her to leave at that point.

Thank you.

[8:00 p.m.]
STATE OF ARIZONA. )
 ) ss.
COUNTY OF MARICOPA )

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing was taken before me, TANIS EASTRIDGE; that all proceedings had upon the taking of said hearing were recorded and taken down by me on a steno machine as backup and thereafter reduced to writing by me; and that the foregoing 36 pages contain a full, true, and correct transcript of said record, all done to the best of my skill and ability.

WITNESS my hand this 10th day of November, 2009.

TANIS EASTRIDGE
Court Reporter

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Appendix D. Comments and Responses
Response to Comment D1-1

The need for the proposed extension of SR 85 occurs in the future when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street would necessitate 6-lanes through Gila Bend. Multiple traffic signals would be required to allow access to and from the side streets. The resultant travel time for through traffic would not meet the needs of ADOT.

This proposed project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing 4-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent for both the Town of Gila Bend and ADOT to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the proposed system interchange.

Further, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension directly to I-8.
Response to Comment D2-1

Comment is noted in the project record.

The need for the proposed extension of SR 85 occurs in the future when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street would necessitate 6-lanes through Gila Bend. Multiple traffic signals would be required to allow access to and from the side streets. The resultant travel time for through traffic would not meet the needs of ADOT.

This proposed project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing 4-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent for both the Town of Gila Bend and ADOT to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the proposed system interchange.

Further, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension directly to I-8.
Response to Comment D3-1

The need for the proposed extension of SR 85 occurs in the future when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street would necessitate 6-lanes through Gila Bend. Multiple traffic signals would be required to allow access to and from the side streets. The resultant travel time for through traffic would not meet the needs of ADOT.

This proposed project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing 4-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent for both the Town of Gila Bend and ADOT to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the proposed system interchange.

Further, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension directly to I-8.
Response to Comment D4-1

Comment is noted in the project record.

The need for the proposed extension of SR 85 occurs in the future when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street would necessitate 6-lanes through Gila Bend. Multiple traffic signals would be required to allow access to and from the side streets. The resultant travel time for through traffic would not meet the needs of ADOT.

This proposed project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing 4-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent for both the Town of Gila Bend and ADOT to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the proposed system interchange.

Further, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension directly to I-8.
Response to Comment D5-1

Comment is noted in the project record.

The need for the proposed extension of SR 85 occurs in the future when the expected traffic forecast on Pima Street would necessitate 6-lanes through Gila Bend. Multiple traffic signals would be required to allow access to and from the side streets. The resultant travel time for through traffic would not meet the needs of ADOT.

This proposed project will not be built until such time the traffic on the existing 4-lanes on Pima Street reaches minimum acceptable levels of delay. When this level of congestion is reached, it will be prudent for both the Town of Gila Bend and ADOT to have SR 85 extended directly to I-8 via the proposed system interchange.

Further, the 2030 traffic forecast shows the traffic demand on Pima Street will nearly double even with the SR 85 extension connected directly to I-8.

Response to Comment D5-2

Refer to Response to Comment D1-1.

The stated approach would not satisfy traffic demand; therefore, it would not meet the needs of the overall mix of the traveling public.

Response to Comment D5-3

Comment is noted in the project record.

Refer to Response to Comment D1-1.
Response to Comment D6-1

Drainage alterations will be determined during final design phase.

Response to Comment D6-2

Impacts to jurisdictional washes will be determined during final design and minimized to the maximum extent practicable.
Response to Comment D7-1

The Design Concept Report (DCR) traffic analysis validates your opinion that a 5-lane Butterfield Trail is not necessary when the SR 85 Extension is connected to I-8 with a full system interchange. The option to 5-lane Butterfield Trail would be a low cost (relative to extending SR 85 from Pima Street to I-8) interim improvement to provide two lanes of traffic in each direction from I-10 to I-8 and may be in place for many years. By the time SR 85 is extended to I-8, it is envisioned the entire area around Butterfield Road would be urbanized.

From: Gila Bend Sun (gilasun@earthlink.net)
Snt: Wednesday, November 04, 2009 11:46 PM
To: Patricia McCabe
Subject: SR-85 at Gila Bend Public Hearing

Thanks for the hearing last Wednesday in Gila Bend. I have several points to make by will make only one on each e-mail.

First the Butterfield Trail 5 lanes issue. The traffic will be much higher on Butterfield when the SR-85 interchanges with Interstate 8. Now all of the I-10 to Phoenix and into US 60 use it. Once the Ti is complete, only the traffic that does not stop at the Services along Butterfield. Probably less than half of what there is now. Five lanes would be a waste of money.

You could save a little and buy a good Microphone and Loud Speaker system!!!

The alternative that I recommend is the "DO NOTHING!" Except for the overpass over SR-85 at Main Street.

Glen Birchfield,
Gila Bend Sun
PO Box Z
Gila Bend, AZ 85337
(928) 983-2383 (phone & fax)
(928) 386-7496 (phone & fax)
Response to Comment D7-2

The DCR shows access to permitted driveways. During final design the resolution of access for driveways not permitted will be finalized.
Response to Comment D8-1

ADOT has provided a web site showing the proposed roadway and right-of-way overlaid on an aerial exhibit that also shows land parcels. Please refer to the Web Site link: http://www.valleyfreeways.com/Highways/Valley_Freeways/SR85/meetings_notices.asp#previous

D8-1

11/2/09

Michael Doehler
ADOT
C/O Logan Simpson Design, Inc
51 W. 3rd St.
Suite 450
Tempe, AZ 85281

Mr. Doehler,

It appears the proposed alternative for Hwy 85 through Gila Bend which was printed in the Gila Bend Sun on October 22, 2009, will impact ours and many other property owners in the area.

Our parcel #’s are as follows: 402 17 002N, 402 17 002P, 402 17 002Q & 402 17 002 R Owned by Pat and Rita Lauderdale. Parcel #’s 402 17 002 L and 402 17 002M Owned by Irma Y. Garcia and Francisco Guerrero.

We would appreciate seeing an overlay of the proposed route over our property to see how this will effect our area in all aspects of building this route and traffic once it is completed.

Thank You,

Rita Lauderdale
Irma Garcia
rlauderdale@palomaesd.org
623 512 3780 cell
928 683 2588 work

PO Box 33
Gila Bend, AZ
85337
Response to Comment D9-1

The Design Concept Report (DCR) study did not include the future Watermelon Road traffic interchange (TI). This DCR begins approximately ¼-mile south of the future Watermelon Road TI alignment. The current alignment for the Watermelon Road TI was approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Arizona State Land and the Maricopa Association of Governments with the approval of the Final Environmental Assessment for State Route 85 – Gila Bend to I-10, TRACS 085 MA 120 H 322501L, Project No STP-02301C in May 2002. Proposals to modify the planned location for the Watermelon TI would need to be addressed during the development of the MCDOT study and any associated environmental evaluation.

Response D9-2

See previous Response to Comment D1-1.
Response to Comment D10-1

Comment is noted in the project record.
Response to Comment D11-1

No Comment