



# Interstate 19 East Frontage Road (Ruby Road to Rio Rico Drive) Study

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### Public Meeting Summary

**Thursday, May 10, 2012  
Rio Rico, Ariz.**

Prepared for:  
Arizona Department of Transportation

Prepared by:  
Gordley Group



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## OVERVIEW

The Arizona Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, held a public meeting to present information and gain input from the public including stakeholders, businesses, residents, property owners and interested parties regarding the I-19 East Frontage Road (Ruby Road to Rio Rico Drive) Study.

The meeting was held on Thursday, May 10, 2012, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Esplendor Resort in Rio Rico, Arizona. Approximately 39 members of the public attended, and six comment forms were received.

## TITLE VI

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act regulations provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Related federal statutes and regulations requires ADOT’s Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program to include nondiscrimination protection on the basis of age, sex, disability and income status in all ADOT programs or activities.

A display board, brochures and survey cards were displayed and made available at the meeting regarding Title VI.

## NOTIFICATION

Notification for the public meeting included:

- Tuesday, April 24, 2012
  - Government official notification emailed
  - ADOT internal memo emailed
  - Newspaper advertisement published in the Nogales International
- Wednesday, April 25, 2012
  - Invitation mailed and emailed to residents, businesses, property owners, stakeholders and local government officials in the study area
  - Newspaper advertisement published in the Green Valley News
  - News release emailed to local media
- Thursday, April 26, 2012
  - Notification was posted to the study website [www.azdot.gov/I19efrontageroad](http://www.azdot.gov/I19efrontageroad)

Copies of the notification materials are included in Appendix A.

## MEETING MATERIALS

Study materials provided to attendees included:

- Sign-in sheet
- Fact sheet
- Comment form
- Question card

Additional resources included:

- Directional and A-frame signage



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- Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act brochures in English and Spanish
- Displays and maps
  - Project development process chart
  - Study area map
  - General study overview
  - Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act informational display
  - Roll plot maps of study area

Copies of meeting materials are included in Appendix B.

### **MEETING FORMAT AND PRESENTATION**

Participants were greeted and asked to sign in. Comment forms were provided and public input was encouraged. Participants were asked to fill out and submit completed comment forms at the meeting or send them in by mail, email or fax. Participants were also asked to write questions on question cards. Question cards were read and responded to during the question and comment session following the presentation.

A presentation was given at 5:45 p.m. and began with a welcome by Linda Ritter, ADOT Communication and Community Partnerships senior community relations officer. Linda reviewed the meeting agenda and introduced the study team and Tucson District Engineer, Todd Emery. Todd informed attendees of the importance of the study.

Jackie Noblitt, project manager for Stanley Consultants, reviewed the study area and purpose, which is to evaluate the east frontage road from Ruby Road to Rio Rico Drive to improve traffic operations and meet current and future traffic needs up to the design year 2040. She noted that the east frontage road provides sole access to the warehouse district in Rio Rico and is used by commercial trucks transporting goods along U.S.-Mexico trade routes. Traffic demand during peak periods exceeds capacity at the Ruby Road traffic interchange. The study will evaluate existing and projected traffic volumes at the I-19 and Ruby Road interchange and along the east frontage road between Ruby Road and Rio Rico Drive. Input is sought from community stakeholders in developing alternatives. The study began in early 2012, and the final study report is anticipated by late 2013.

Linda concluded the presentation by encouraging continued public participation and opening the meeting to a question and comment session.

The PowerPoint presentation is included in Appendix C.

### **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Input received during the question and comment session is listed below. The study team addressed questions submitted on question cards during the meeting as follows:

Q: How would you assure traffic at Rio Rico Drive and Exit 12 will not get out of control and effectively lock down and disable the intersection?



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A: There are always going to be incidents and occurrences that are beyond our control. Our goal is to look at the design year 2040, to project traffic volumes and accommodate those volume increases with the proposed improvements.

Q: What is the project timeline (through construction) and how long will it take?

A: The study will last about two years. It started in February and should conclude by the end of next year, in 2013. The study includes inventorying existing conditions and analysis of the geometrics and projected traffic volumes. We will recommend a solution. Beyond our study, the timing is unknown at this time. Funding is very limited, and this project will compete with other projects in the state for available funding. This project is very important to the Tucson District and will be a priority.

Q: As I recall, studies indicate traffic in this area would increase steadily each year. Why is the east frontage road only one-way north from Kipper Street? Why hasn't the west frontage road been completed all the way to Rio Rico Drive? Share the traffic.

A: When studying the area a few years ago, the understanding was that some residents in Rio Rico did not want the road two-way. But as we have gone out and spoken to the stakeholders prior to this meeting, it looks like this is no longer an issue. Making the east frontage road two-way all the way between Ruby Road and Rio Rico Road is something we will look at as part of this study.

Q: How are you getting trucking company input for issues?

A: We met with Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA) last month to hear their concerns, and they have presented some proposed alternatives to consider.

Q: Would it be possible to construct on-ramps for truck traffic only, from the frontage road to I-19?

A: That is something we can consider. Normally, ramps are not constructed only for certain businesses. There are criteria about building new interchanges, and FHWA definitely gets involved in those. There are also requirements and limitations about exit and entrance ramp spacing along an interstate system. There is a fairly extensive gap between the Ruby Road traffic interchange and Rio Rico Drive traffic interchange, so I think we can look at that and talk to FHWA about their thoughts.

Q: Is an overpass over the railroad and over the frontage road at Ruby Road being considered yet?

A: The railroad crossing on Ruby Road is beyond the limits of this project.

Q: Is this for local traffic, just to grade separate the frontage road from the crossroad?

Stakeholder comment: All traffic would have one level through-road. It cuts down on the lights and wait time and could work very effectively.

A: There may be some way to separate traffic that isn't as expensive as a grade separation.



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Q: Is there an easement available along the east side of the industrial park that might allow one-way flow throughout the development? When a train is going by, it causes congestion of the whole area. This is why it should be considered an issue with ADOT as well.

A: We believe the presence of the railroad so close to the east side of the warehouses may prohibit a roadway along the east side; however, we will explore this possibility further.

Q: If creating two-way traffic on the east frontage road for the full length from Ruby Road to Rio Rico Drive will provide traffic safety to both residents and commercial truck traffic, can the project be placed on a priority fast track? Truck traffic in Santa Cruz County impacts every state in the U.S. economically, creating jobs and feeding the nation.

A: This project is a high priority for ADOT Tucson District, which is why we are doing this study. We are using Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) Funds for this study, which are only available within 50 miles of the border. Whether these funds are available to be used in the future, we don't know. Once we get through the study, we can't continue and go into a design phase until we have funding. The State Transportation Board needs to approve project funding, and we are planning on submitting the project.

Q: As a political force, along with the truckers, what outcome does FPAA want?

A: That would be a question for the head of FPAA.

Response from Lance Jungmeyer, President of FPAA:

We essentially want two different things. We want to make sure that Exit 12 is safer and that the traffic signals there are more effective. An important part of that is making it safe for the trucks that actually use it and can get off there.

Maybe some sort of flyover exit there, similar to Grand Avenue, could cross over traffic to route trucks directly onto the frontage road. We also want to reduce the friction between passenger vehicles and trucks.

Stakeholder comment: I believe you will. There is no friction at this point at Exit 17. But this could create friction at Exit 17.

Q: Can a northbound lane be installed in the area of Kipper Street? If the northbound traffic can exit onto I-19 a little earlier, that would ease the bottleneck at Rio Rico Drive and Ruby Road.

A: If you are referring to another ramp onto I-19, we can look into that. It's something FHWA would get involved in, because they are in charge of the interstate system.

Q: How much traffic do you anticipate by 2020, and how do you plan to accommodate both residential traffic and commercial traffic? What about back-ups at the train tracks? Is that ADOT's problem or the Union Pacific Railroad's problem?

A: While we appreciate and value the questions and concerns we are receiving tonight, we don't have all the answers at this point, as this study is just beginning. We have started collecting existing traffic information, so we have done some counts at this point. As far as projecting traffic into the future, whether it's 2020 or 2040, we haven't really started that analysis yet. Projecting traffic volume into the future is one of our first tasks.



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At this point, questions were taken from the audience as follows (without the use of question cards):

Q: Would the project be phased? Or would the entire project be approved at once? There are initial things that could be addressed by opening the east frontage road for southbound vehicle traffic but not allowing trucks, at this point, in order to alleviate current Ruby Road congestion. In addition, open up the west frontage road and take that through so not everybody is concentrated specifically on Ruby Road. This would allow options for accessing the freeway.

A: We will look at an ultimate solution, but especially on big projects, ADOT does frequently implement them in phases. If there are lower costs or immediate improvements that need to be made, the more immediate project could be moved ahead of the ultimate improvements.

Q: Will you entertain looking at the west frontage road in this particular study?

A: This study does not include the west frontage road. ADOT has already started a separate study of the west frontage road.

Q: What is the completion date for the study? Is it funded?

A: The anticipated completion date for this study is late 2013, and it is not funded.

Q: You mentioned that once a project is funded, it's still on a waiting list because there is competition with other areas. Can a community solicit ADOT to get a higher position on that waiting list, or is there any formality we need to be aware of to get attention?

A: Absolutely. The State Transportation Board is the body that approves projects to be put on the five-year construction program. For a project to move past the scoping stage (which we are currently in) into design and construction, the State Transportation Board must approve. Currently the State Transportation Board Chair is Bobbie Lundstrom, who represents Santa Cruz County.

Copies of the completed question cards are included in Appendix D.

## WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ten written comments and questions were received in the form of comment forms and emails between April 26, 2012, and May 24, 2012.

A copy of the comment transcription is included in Appendix E.

## APPENDICES

- A: Notification
- B: Meeting Materials
- C: PowerPoint Presentation
- D: Question and Comment Session Cards
- E: Comment Transcription