

Douglas Commercial Land Port of Entry Connector Road Study

Initial Design Concept Report and
Draft Environmental Assessment

Public Hearing
November 19, 2024

Hello, I am Courtney King, a Community Relations Supervisor with the Arizona Department of Transportation. Thank you for joining us for this public hearing for the Douglas Commercial Land Port of Entry Connector Road Design Concept Report and Environmental Study.

Interpretation of the presentation in Spanish is available tonight. If you need interpretation, please see our interpreter, Jessamyn. Jessamyn will repeat this information in Spanish. *(Interpreter will come forward to interpret this portion in Spanish).*

Before we review the agenda for this meeting, I would like to recognize any elected officials or GSA and FHWA officials in attendance tonight.

We're looking forward to your comments and questions. If you are interested in providing verbal comments during the formal hearing portion of our meeting tonight, please sign up at the speaker registration table located in the back. After the presentation, we'll provide information for all the methods of asking a question or making a comment. Keep in mind that after this meeting, you can continue to ask questions or provide comments anytime through Dec. 9.

Agenda

- Hearing Purpose and NEPA requirements
- Study Background, Purpose and Need
- Study Process and Alternatives Considered
- Environmental Analysis Performed
- Preferred Alternative
- Next Steps and Timeline
- How to provide Public Hearing comments

Tonight, we will discuss the following the agenda items:

1. The Hearing Purpose and NEPA Requirements
2. Review the Study Background, its Purpose and Need
3. Discuss the Study Process and Alternatives Considered
4. Provide some basic information on the NEPA Environmental Analysis Performed
5. Present the Preferred Alternative
6. Discuss Next Steps and Timeline
7. and explain how to provide Public Hearing comments. After the presentation, we will begin our formal public comment period. For those not giving comments, staff will be available to answer questions during the Open House.

Now I would like to introduce our first presenter Robert Lemke, Principal Transportation Professional Engineer with Stantec.

Hearing Purpose

- Provide overview of study, purpose and need
- Present the alternatives considered and the preferred roadway alternative that will safely accommodate commercial truck traffic from SR 80 to the new LPOE facility
- Provide overview of environmental considerations
- Provide opportunity for public comments

Thank you, Courtney. The purpose of tonight's public hearing is to provide an overview of the study, alternatives considered for the connector road, the preferred alternative for the location of the connector road to the new commercial port of entry and provide an opportunity for formal public comments.

NEPA Requirements

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that:
 - Agencies analyze, disclose, avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts for studies with federal involvement
 - Applicable federal agencies review the study's impacts and mitigations documented during the NEPA process
- Environmental Assessment (EA): NEPA document that evaluates potential impacts
- EA describes the need for the proposed action, alternatives developed and environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative and No-Build Alternative

This study and public hearing is being conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires agencies to analyze, disclose, avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts for studies with federal involvement. The study team has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment which describes the need for the study, documents the alternatives considered and evaluated, and addresses the environmental impacts and planned mitigation.

NEPA Disclosure

The environmental review, consultation and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this study are being or have been carried out by ADOT pursuant to 23 USC 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated 06/25/2024 and executed by FHWA and ADOT.

ADOT has assumed the Federal Highway Administration's responsibility for carrying out the National Environmental Policy Act environmental reviews and approvals per the executed agreement dated June 25, 2024, between the Federal Highway Administration and ADOT. As part of this study ADOT serves as the lead agency and has the authority to approve this study.

Study Background

- 2019: General Services Administration (GSA) identified need for separate commercial and non-commercial Ports of Entry in Douglas
- Commercial Land Port of Entry (LPOE) site was identified approximately 4.5 mi west of existing LPOE



The General Services Administration conducted a study in 2019, which identified the need to separate commercial and non-commercial traffic at the border to improve traffic flow and safety.

As a result of that effort, a new commercial port of entry facility is planned, which will be located 4.5 miles west of the existing Castro Land Port of Entry on an 80-acre site at the intersection of James Ranch Road and the U.S. / Mexico border.

Once construction of the Douglas Land Port of Entry has been completed, commercial operations will move from the Castro Land Port of Entry to the new facility.

The new port would process commercial traffic for the binational region and provide cross-border access between the states of Arizona and Sonora, Mexico.

Our current study evaluated a new connector road to provide connectivity between the new commercial land port of entry and State Route 80.

Study Purpose & Need

- Support planning by the City of Douglas and GSA by providing a new all-weather roadway connection between SR 80 and the new commercial LPOE
- No all-weather, paved roadway facility between GSA's new commercial Land Port of Entry and SR 80



Purpose: The purpose of the ADOT City of Douglas new Commercial Land Port of Entry Connector Road Study is to support planning by the City of Douglas and GSA by providing a new roadway connection to SR 80 from the future Land Port of Entry, and provide improved access for future economic development.

Need: Improvements are needed to connect the new land port of entry to the existing transportation system because there is currently no all-weather, paved roadway facility between GSA's new commercial Land Port of Entry and SR 80.

Study Process

- Prepare conceptual engineering options for improvements (Design Concept Report)
- Prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate impacts of the options
- Includes a No-Build option in which no improvements are made
- Seek input from the public and affected agencies
- Identify a Preferred Build Alternative that best meets the study purpose, needs, goals and has agency and public support
- Identify Selected Alternative (agency decision)

As part of the study process, ADOT prepared engineering concepts of the options for the connector road as part of the Design Concept Report. We have developed the Initial DCR, which identifies the Preferred Build Alternative.

We also prepared a draft Environmental Assessment to evaluate the various environmental considerations of a new connector road, which are compared to the No Build alternative, which means no improvements would be made.

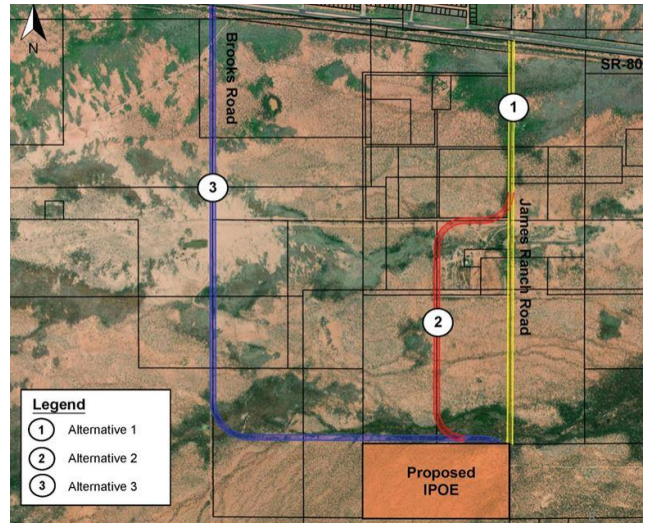
At previous meetings we presented various alternatives and sought public input. Based on the engineering and environmental analysis and community input, ADOT identified a Preferred Alternative for the location of the connector road and associated improvements that best meets the goals for the study.

We are here tonight to present the Preferred Alternative as part of the draft DCR and EA, and seek comments from the public.

Once we have received public comment, the ADOT study team will determine the final selected alternative, which represents the agency's decision and will be identified in the final EA and DCR documents.

Initial Alternatives Considered

- Alternative 1: James Ranch Road alignment
- Alternative 2: Puzzi Ranch Road alignment
- Alternative 3: Brooks Road alignment
- No-Build Alternative: Do nothing



ADOT evaluated several alignment options for a new connector road between SR 80 and the new Land Port of Entry Facility, located on James Ranch Road and the US/Mexico border. Note that a new road would be constructed to the facility in Mexico, to provide a direct route to the facility for commercial trucks as they cross the border.

- Alternative 1, which is in yellow, shows the new roadway that follows James Ranch Road from SR 80 to the eastern end of the future commercial Port of Entry facility.
- Alternative 2 shown in red is the new roadway from SR 80 to the Land Port of Entry, which would initially follow the James Ranch Road alignment, then continue west on the Puzzi Ranch Road alignment, then south to the new Land Port of Entry, with access to the new Land Port of Entry near the middle of the parcel.
- Alternative 3: Shown in purple shows the roadway from SR 80 along the Brooks Road alignment, then east along the northern edge of the new Land Port of Entry, with access to the new Land Port of Entry near the eastern end of its parcel.
- The final alternative is the No-Build alternative, which is to do nothing.

Now I would like to introduce Don Smith with Stantec to discuss the Environmental Analysis performed.

Environmental Analysis

As part of the Draft Environmental Analysis, ADOT evaluated:

- **Air Quality Analysis**
- Biological Evaluations
- Visual Impacts
- **Noise Analysis**
- Water Quality
- All other impacts evaluated

Thanks Rob and hello everyone. As part of the EA, the ADOT study team evaluated various environmental considerations of the alternatives considered and the Preferred Alternative for the connector road. The two items you see in bold, we'll come back and speak to in a moment.

- For biological evaluations, field surveys were conducted for threatened and or endangered species and Arizona native plants. There will be no species impacts. Some native plants will need to be relocated.
- In terms of visual impacts, field surveys were conducted to characterize the visual setting of the study area. Minor impacts will occur because where the roadways will be constructed will change the visual setting to a slight degree, but not significantly. There will be greater impact to visual setting from future land development in the study area.
- For water quality, potential minor impacts from erosion and stream flows will be mitigated to meet the water quality standards of the state and federal agencies.

Environmental Analysis (cont.)

Air Quality Analysis

- A study level and regional transportation air quality conformity analysis was prepared per EPA requirements.
- The study is not expected to have a negative impact on air quality.
- A technical report documenting this analysis is included as Appendix A in the Draft EA.

A conformity analysis determined that this study will not have a negative effect on air quality. EPA, FHWA and ADEQ reviewed the conformity analysis per regulations. Local analysis indicated the study is not a study of air quality concern.

A technical report documenting this analysis is included as Appendix A in the Draft EA that can be found on the study website and at repository locations that we'll share later in our presentation.

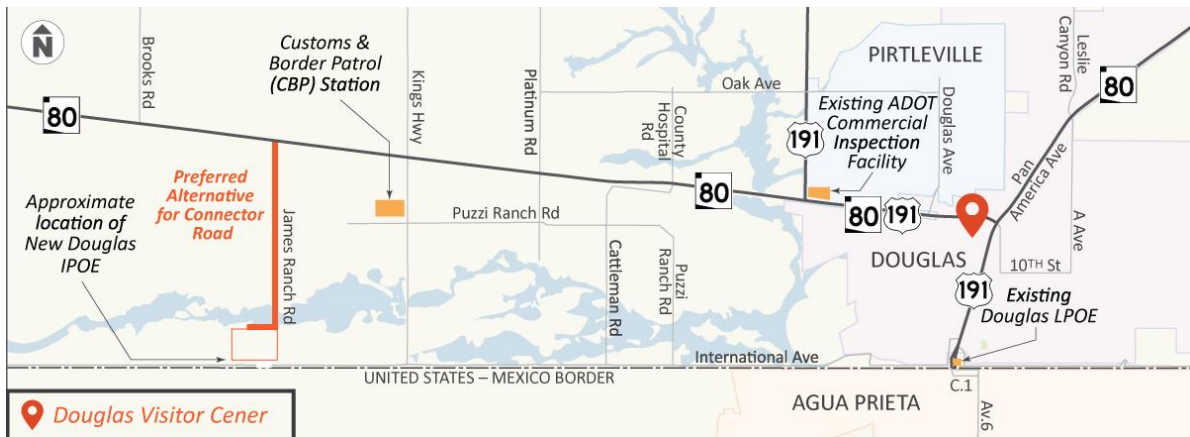
Environmental Analysis (cont.)

Noise Analysis

- A noise analysis was conducted following federal guidelines and ADOT's current Noise Abatement Requirements.
- Noise barriers were evaluated but are not warranted based on ADOT Noise Policy and federal guidelines.
- See Draft EA Noise Section and Appendix F.

The noise analysis was conducted on both SR 80 and James Ranch Rd. where sensitive receptors (homes) are present. The analysis determined that barriers are not needed as Noise Abatement Criteria were not exceeded on the Preferred Alternative.
Now back to Robert.

Preferred Alternative for Connector Road



The study team has identified the preferred Alternative route for the connector road to the new Commercial Land Port of Entry facility, which is shown on this map and generally follows the existing James Ranch Road alignment. The Land Port of Entry facility will be located immediately west of James Ranch Road and north of the U.S.- Mexico border.

Commercial traffic from Mexico would travel on a new road constructed in Mexico that will connect directly into the Land Port of Entry facility, diverting commercial vehicles away from the existing Raul Hector Castro Port of Entry in downtown Douglas.

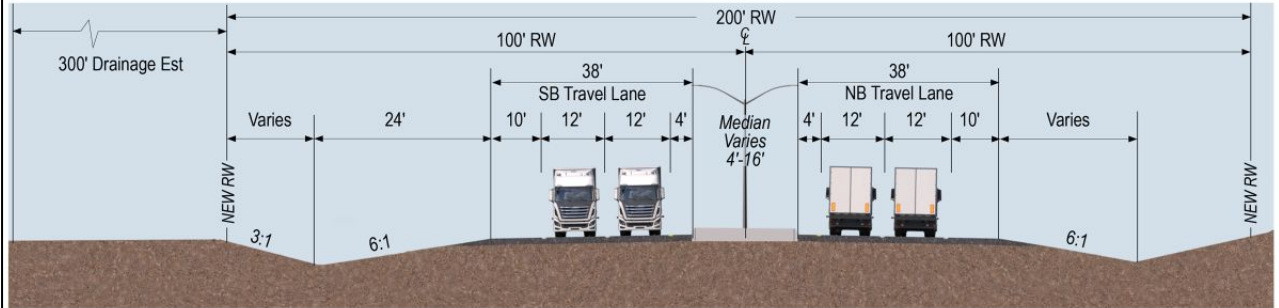
Access to the new land port of entry for commercial truck traffic entering on the US side from the north will occur beginning at the intersection of State Route 80 and James Ranch Road and will follow the road south to the LPOE facility.

It is anticipated that the Connector Road would include two roundabouts to access the LPOE and a separate lane for workers to access the facility.

Preferred Alternative Cross Section

JAMES RANCH ROAD (ULTIMATE)

Sta 118+00 to 188+40



TYPICAL CONNECTOR ROAD CROSS SECTION
(LOOKING NORTH)

NOT TO SCALE, FOR VISUALIZATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Preferred Alternative Cross-Section consists of two 12-foot lanes in each direction with a 4-foot inside and 10-foot outside shoulders as shown in the exhibit.

Preferred Alternative Findings

Right-of-Way and Easement Requirements

- Connector Road Construction will require:
 - 200 feet of new right-of-way
 - A 300-foot wide drainage easement west of connector road
- Approximately one dozen partial property impacts and potentially one potential full-property acquisition anticipated

The Preferred Alternative will require 200 feet of new Roadway Right-of-Way and 300 feet for a Drainage Easement on the west side of the connector road.

Partial property impacts to approximately one-dozen parcels and potentially one-full property acquisition are anticipated.

Project Funding

- Project construction is included in ADOT's FY25-29 Five Year Program for design, right-of-way and construction.
- Anticipate a combination of federal and ADOT funding.
- ADOT is seeking a federal grant for additional construction funding.

The connector road project is included in ADOT's FY 2025-29 Five Year Program for Design, Right-of-Way, and Construction.

It is anticipated that both federal and state funding will be used for the project design and construction, which is expected to cost approximately \$49 million. Due to the large project costs, ADOT has applied for funding grants.

Next Steps and Timeline

Study Timeline



This graphic shows the study schedule, moving from left to right.

The study started in January 2023, with an exploration of various options for the connector road. ADOT conducted public meetings in April 2023 and August 2023 to seek public input regarding the scope of the study and alternatives being considered for the connector road.

The study team evaluated and narrowed the alternatives to a preferred alternative, and prepared the draft environmental assessment and design concept report. These reports, along with the preferred alternative are presented here tonight. Following the close of the comment period on December 9th, the study team will review and address all comments from the public and agencies.

ADOT, in coordination with its study partners, will select the final alternative, which will be identified in the final EA and DCR documents and released to the public as the final decision for the study.

Thank you. At this time, I'll pass it back to Courtney to close the

presentation and start the formal public hearing.

Availability of Draft EA/DCR Documents for Review

The City of Douglas Connector Road Draft EA and Initial DCR documents are available for review through 12/9/2024 in the following locations:

- Study website: [Azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy](https://azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy)
- Local repository locations:
 - Douglas City Manager's Office: 425 E. Tenth St., Douglas, AZ 85607
 - Douglas Public Library: 560 E. Tenth St., Douglas, AZ 85607
 - Cochise County Development Services Building and Public Library: 1415 W. Melody Ln., Bisbee, AZ 85603

The Douglas commercial LPOE draft EA/DCR documents are available for review through December 9, 2024 at the following locations:

Local repository locations:

- Douglas City Manager's Office: 425 E. Tenth St., Douglas, AZ 85607
- Douglas Public Library: 560 E. Tenth St., Douglas, AZ 85607
- Cochise County Development Services Building and Public Library: 1415 W. Melody Ln., Bisbee, AZ 85603

And these documents are also available to review tonight in the Open House and also on the Study website:

[Azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy](https://azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy)

How to Comment

Commenting deadline is **December 9, 2024**

- Tonight's hearing:
 - Provide verbal comments to a panel of study team members
 - Privately submit comments directly to a court reporter
 - Submit written comments on a comment form
- **Online:** [Azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy](https://azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy)
- **Email:** study@SR80DouglasIPOE.info
- **Call:** 1.888.581.3135
- **Mail:** Attn. Douglas Land Port of Entry Connector Road Study
Gordley Group
2540 N. Tucson Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85716

Your input is important, and we appreciate you taking the time to learn more about the study and provide your feedback. The presentation along with all the materials provided tonight can be found on the study website at [Azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy](https://azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy). You can continue to view information about the study and submit additional questions or comments. If you don't have computer access, please contact us at 1.888.581.3135. As a reminder, comments are being accepted during the comment period through Dec. 9, through the following options:

You may submit written comments on a comment form here tonight or online at [azdot.gov/Douglas IPOERoadStudy](https://azdot.gov/DouglasIPOERoadStudy)

You may submit a comment via email at study@SR80DouglasIPOE.info

You may submit a comment over the phone at 888.581.3135

And you can send your comment via US mail to Attn. Douglas Commercial Land Port of Entry Connector Road Study
Gordley Group 2540 N. Tucson Blvd. Tucson, AZ 85716

Public Hearing Comment Process

- Complete a registration card
- When your name is called, approach the microphone
- Provide comment to the panel
- Commenters will have a four minute time limit
- The panel is not able to respond to comments
- Questions should be directed to the study team during the open house

We will now begin the Public Hearing, where you can give your formal public comments verbally. A reminder that if you would like to provide a comment to our panel, please register at the speaker registration table. Speakers will be called in the order they registered. When it is your turn to speak, please state your name and speak clearly for our court reporter. Once it is your turn, you will have four minutes to provide your comments.

Our panelists tonight include: Todd Emery from ADOT, Jackie Watkins from Cochise County, Luis Pedroza from the city of Douglas and Donald Huish from the city of Douglas

Please be aware, our panel is not allowed to respond to any comments or questions. If you have a question or would like clarification on anything, please head to the Open House area where you can have those discussions with members of our study team. All formal Comments provided by the public will be responded to in the hearing comment summary.

Douglas Commercial Land Port of Entry Connector Road Study

Thank you for attending!

Thank you for attending the public hearing.