

FHWA-AZ-EIS-20-01-D



SONORAN
CORRIDOR STUDY

**Draft Tier 1
Environmental
Impact Statement**

October 2020 | P9101 01P
Federal Aid No. 410-A(BFI)



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

ADOT

Public Hearing and Virtual Public Engagement

December 2020



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

ADOT

CIVIL RIGHTS

ADOT'S NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) hereby gives public notice that it is the Agency's policy to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and other related authorities in all of its programs and activities. ADOT's Title VI and ADA Programs require that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.

Any person, who believes his/her Title VI or ADA rights have been violated, may file a complaint. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the ADOT Civil Rights Office within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For additional information about ADOT's Civil Rights programs and the procedures to file a complaint contact ADOT Civil Rights Office via the information listed below:

AVISO PÚBLICO DE LA LEY DE NO-DISCRIMINACIÓN DE ADOT

El Departamento de Transporte del Estado de Arizona (ADOT) informa al público que esta agencia tiene como regla asegurar el cumplimiento total del Título VI de la Ley de los Derechos Civiles de 1964, del Título II de la Ley de ciudadanos Americanos con Discapacidades de 1990 (ADA) y otras normas relacionadas con todos sus programas y actividades. Los programas del Título VI y ADA de ADOT exigen que a ninguna persona se le excluya de participar, se le nieguen beneficios o de ninguna otra manera sea sujeta a discriminación en ningún programa o actividad de ADOT por motivo de raza, color, país de origen, o discapacidad.

Cualquier persona que crea que se han violado sus derechos bajo el Título VI o el ADA, puede presentar una queja. Esta queja debe presentarse por escrito a la Oficina de Derechos Civiles de ADOT dentro de ciento ochenta (180) días a partir de la fecha en que se alega que ocurrió la discriminación.

Para recibir más información sobre los programas de Derechos Civiles de ADOT y los procedimientos para presentar una queja, por favor póngase en contacto con la Oficina de Derechos Civiles de ADOT a través la información que aparece abajo:

ADOT Civil Rights Office
206 S. 17th Avenue, Mail Drop 155-A
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602.712.8946, 602.239.6257 FAX, azdot.gov

Meeting Presentation

- Tier 1 vs. Tier 2
- Study Area
- Tier 1 Study Process
- Study Need and Purpose
- Alternatives Analysis
- Meeting Need and Purpose
- Preferred Alternative
- Environmental Effects
- Section 106 of the NHPA
- Relocations and Acquisitions
- Study Outreach
- Next Steps
- How to submit comments

Tier 1 EIS:

A NEPA Environmental Study that analyzes a large project or program on a broad scale.

SUMMARY:

Program level analysis of multiple 2,000-foot-wide corridors within which a new transportation facility could be located.

OUTCOME:

Determine a single corridor alternative for further analysis, with an alignment to be developed during Tier 2.

Tier 2 Environmental Study:

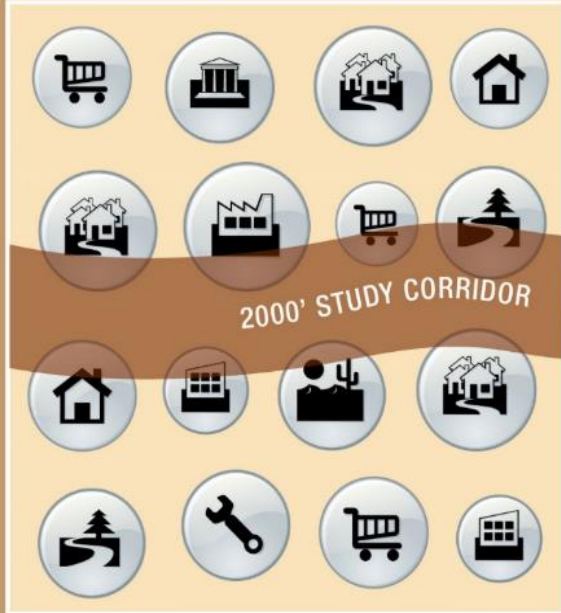
A NEPA Environmental Study that analyzes project sections in greater detail.

SUMMARY:

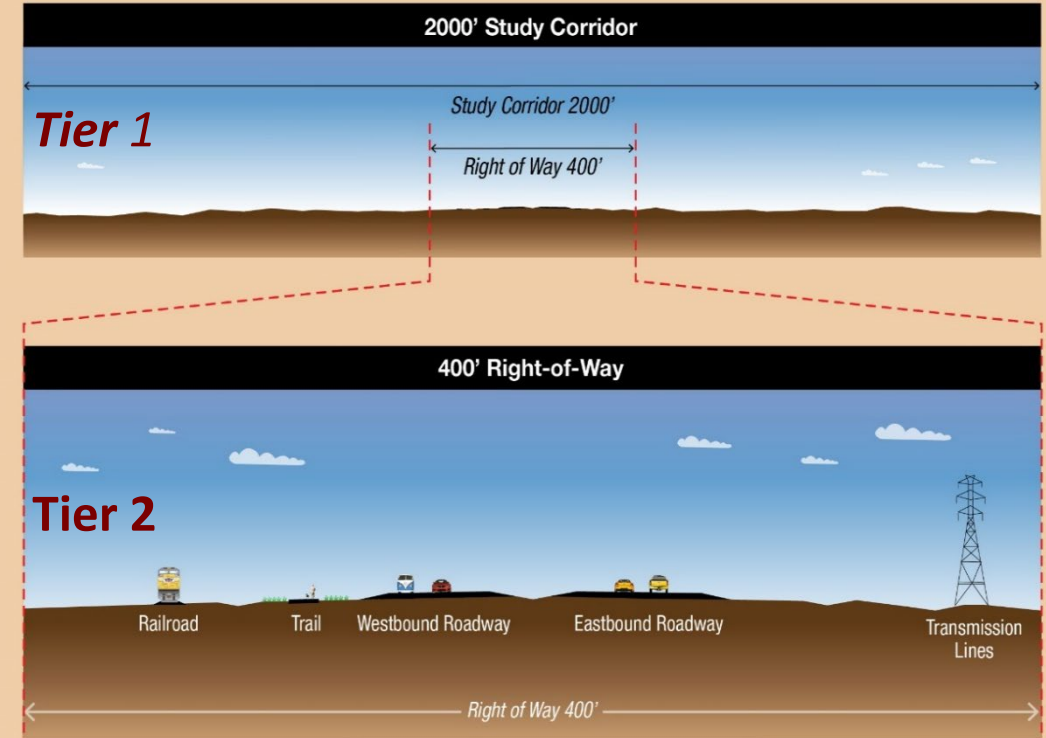
Evaluate design concepts for specific alignments within the corridor, such as 400 feet or a typical freeway alignment. Refine to minimize impacts.

OUTCOME:

Select an alignment and obtain environmental clearance for that alignment.



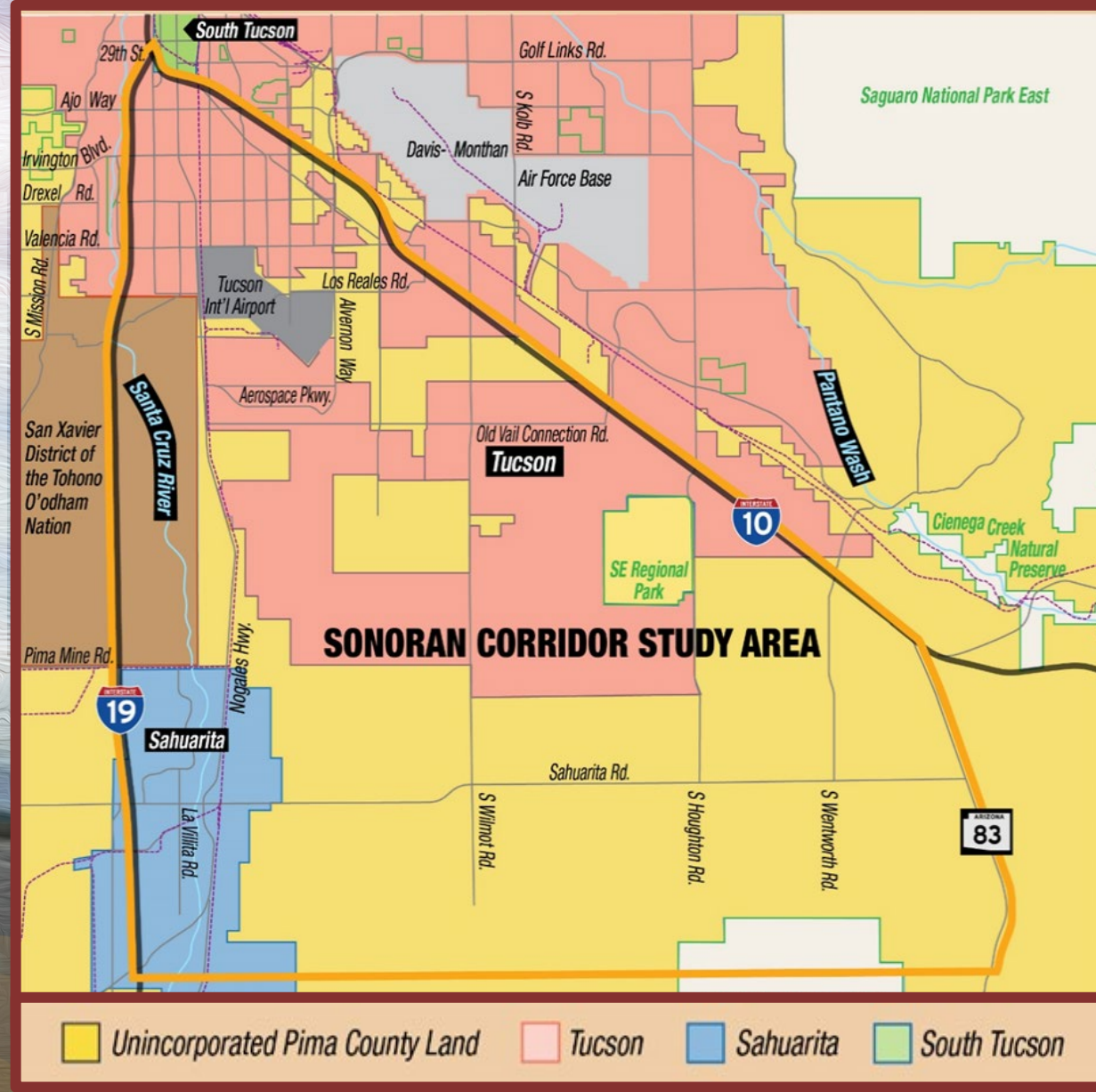
Tier 1 vs. Tier 2



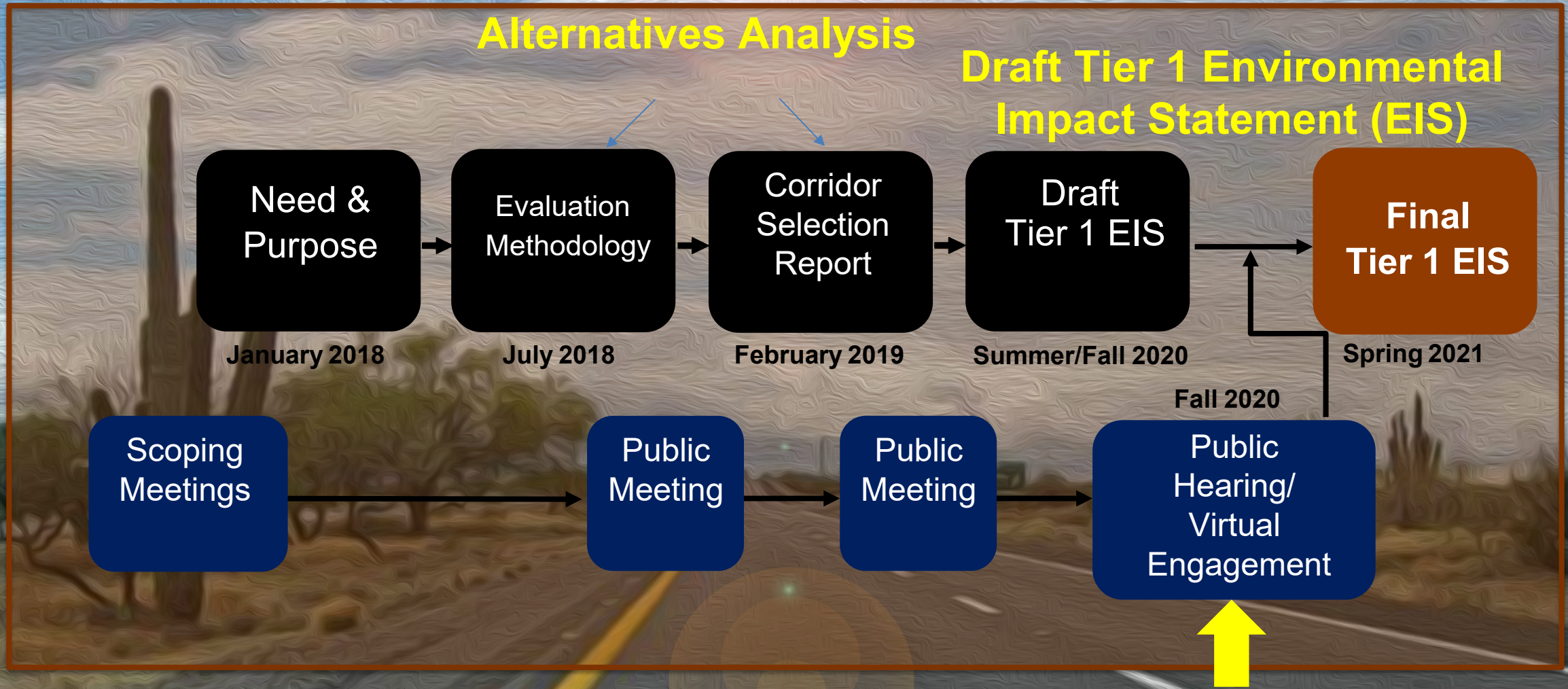
Study Corridor Width, Right-of-Way Width, New Facility Width

Study Area

The Sonoran Corridor was designated by Congress in the **FAST Act** as a high priority corridor connecting I-19 to I-10, south of Tucson International Airport.



Tier 1 Study Process



Need for the Sonoran Corridor Study

Based on scoping input and previous studies, the following needs exist within the Study Area:

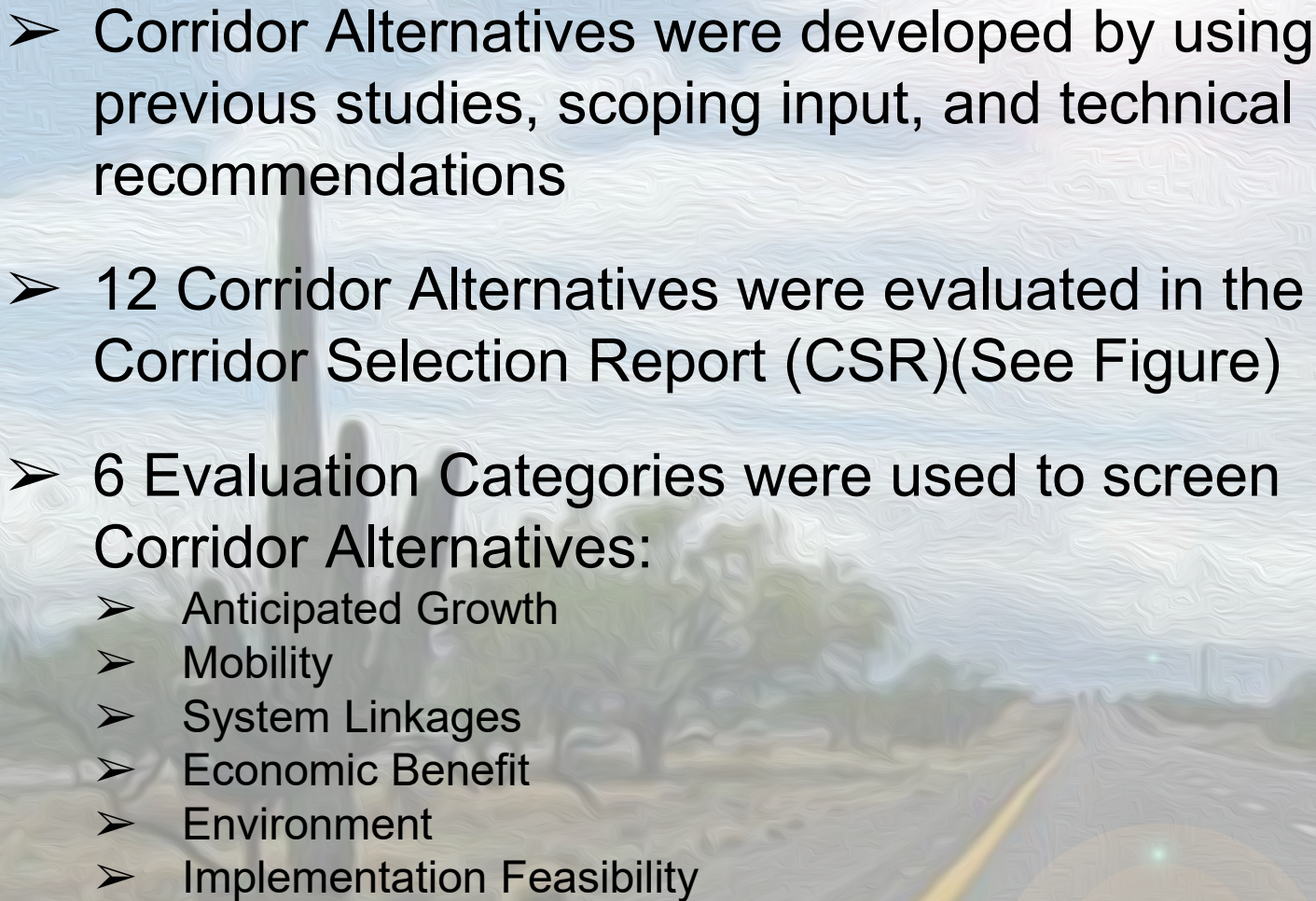
- The current transportation network has a limited ability to service new growth plans and existing activity centers
- Increased congestion and unacceptable Level of Service within the Study Area by 2045
- Lack of a linkage connection between I-19 and I-10 south of the TUS inhibits mobility

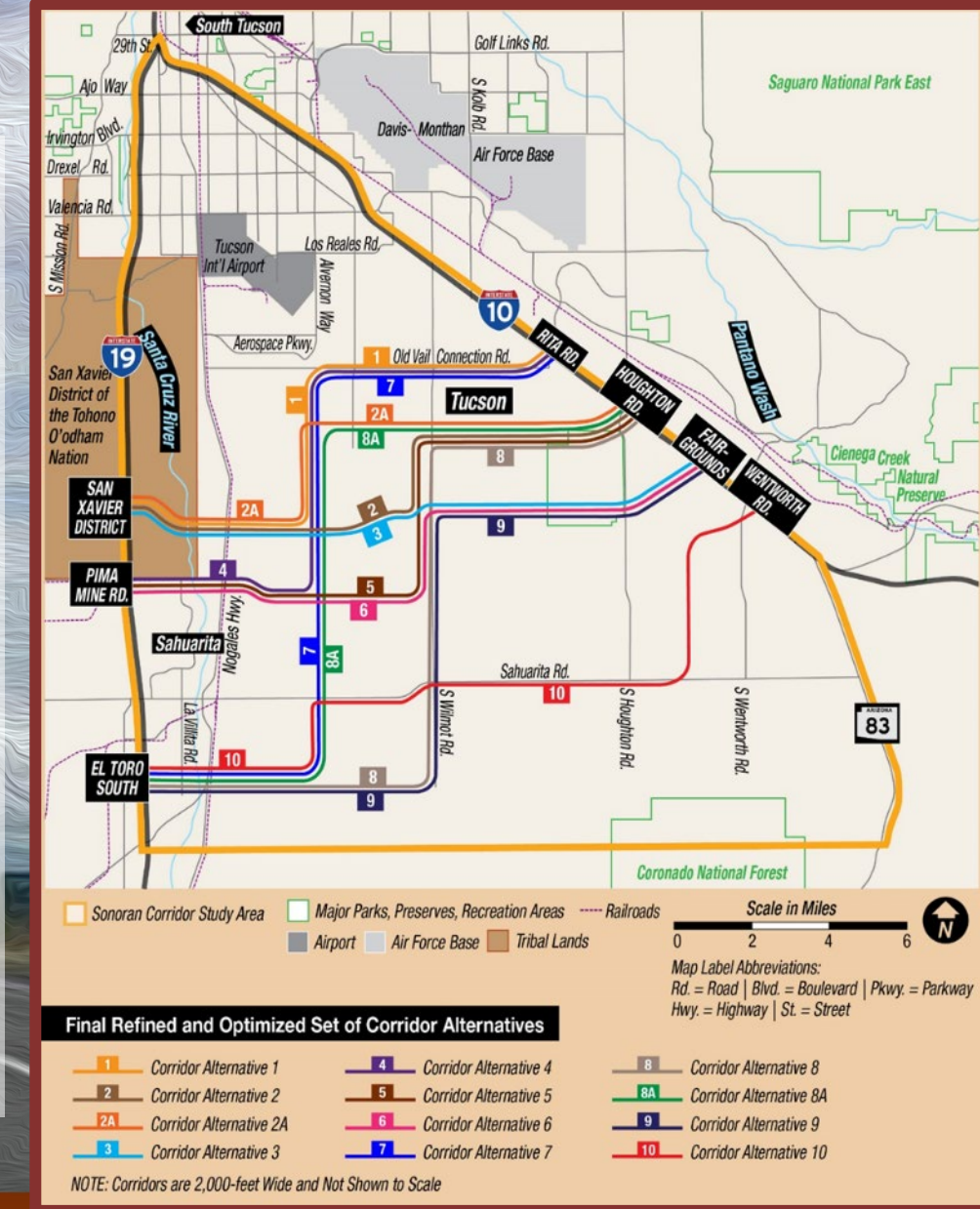
Purpose of the Sonoran Corridor Study

Given the needs that exist, the overall purpose of the study is to identify a high-capacity, access-controlled corridor that will:

- Improve the current transportation network to better serve growth plans and existing activity centers by affording better access
- Reduce congestion and improve 2045 Level of Service within the Study Area
- Provide a linkage connection that will improve mobility by reducing travel times and cost

Alternatives Analysis (1 of 2)

- 
- Corridor Alternatives were developed by using previous studies, scoping input, and technical recommendations
 - 12 Corridor Alternatives were evaluated in the Corridor Selection Report (CSR)(See Figure)
 - 6 Evaluation Categories were used to screen Corridor Alternatives:
 - Anticipated Growth
 - Mobility
 - System Linkages
 - Economic Benefit
 - Environment
 - Implementation Feasibility



Alternatives Analysis (2 of 2)

- 3 Corridor Alternatives were recommended for further evaluation. Presented to agency stakeholders and the public in March 2019
- The Reasonable Range of Alternatives (See Figure) that was evaluated in the Draft Tier 1 EIS consisted of the following:
 - Alternative 1
 - Alternative 7
 - Alternative 8A
 - No-Build Alternative
- Finalized in June 2019, the CSR summarizes the Alternatives Analysis



Draft Tier 1 EIS – How Reasonable Range Alternatives Meet Need and Purpose (1 of 3)

NEED AND PURPOSE	METRICS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 1	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 7	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 8A
Serve Population and Employment Growth					
<p>Need: High-growth areas and existing activity centers need access to an improved transportation network.</p> <p>Purpose: Provide a high-priority, high-capacity transportation corridor to serve population/employment growth and existing and new employment centers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provides access to planned growth areas in study area ➤ Total distance to activity centers in and near the study area (shorter is better) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does not serve growth areas in the study area. ➤ Does not improve access to activity centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provides direct access to the areas of greatest growth and directly serves employment at or near the TUS area and I-10 ➤ 76.75 miles - Improves access to activities in the northerly portions of study area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provides direct access to greatest growth in study area and Sahuarita. Directly serves employment near TUS and I-10 ➤ 66.59 miles – Better access to activities in northerly parts of study area and Sahuarita 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provides direct access to areas of greatest growth in the Town of Sahuarita. Does not directly serve employment centers at and near TUS and I-10. ➤ 75.62 miles - Improves access to activities in study area mainly within Sahuarita

Draft Tier 1 EIS – How Reasonable Range Alternatives Meet Need and Purpose (2 of 3)

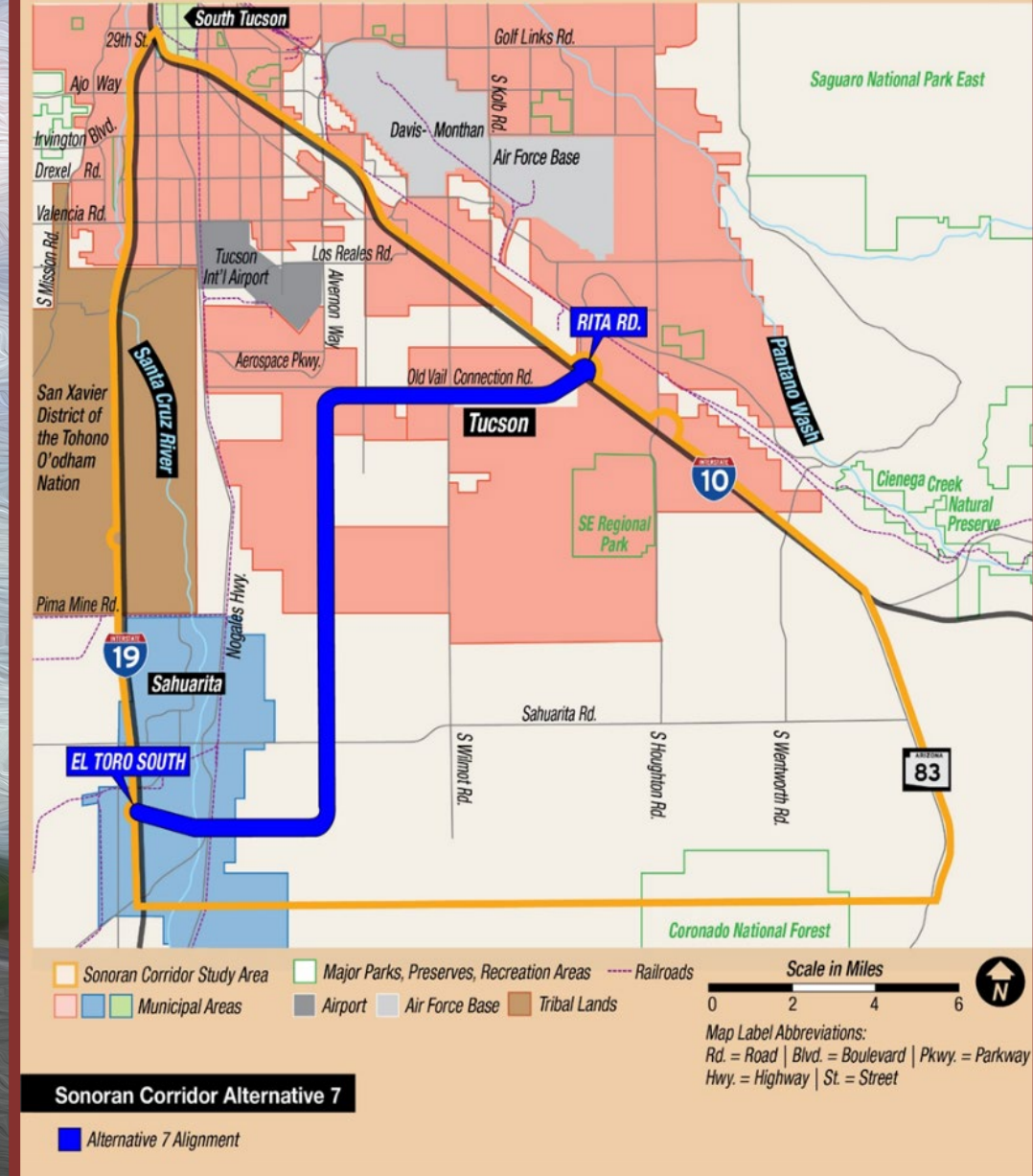
NEED AND PURPOSE	METRICS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 1	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 7	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 8A
Reduce Traffic Congestion					
Need: Improve forecasted capacity shortages in the study area. Purpose: Improve 2045 traffic Level of Service (LOS), volume-to-capacity ratio (V/C) to reduce congestion in study area by 2045.	➤ Changes to overall 2045 LOS (V/C) within study area	➤ Does not reduce congestion	➤ Reduces V/C by 5.4% compared to No-Build	➤ Reduces V/C by 12.2% compared to No-Build	➤ Reduces V/C by 13.8% compared to No-Build

Draft Tier 1 EIS – How Reasonable Range Alternatives Meet Need and Purpose (3 of 3)

NEED AND PURPOSE	METRICS	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 1	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 7	CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE 8A
Improve System Linkages					
<p>Need: The lack of system linkages south of TUS inhibits efficient regional, interstate, and international mobility in the study area.</p> <p>Purpose: A high-priority, high-capacity transportation corridor linking I-19 and I-10 south of TUS to improve regional, interstate, and international travel mobility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Change in travel times in and near study area ➤ Change in 2045 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT) compared to No-Build 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does not reduce travel times or affect VMT/VHT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduces travel time by 15.9 minutes compared to No Build ➤ Increases VMT and reduces VHT in study area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduces travel time by 16.6 minutes compared to No Build ➤ Increases VMT and reduces VHT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Travel time 17.8 minutes shorter than No Build ➤ Increases VMT and reduces VHT

Preferred Alternative

- **Corridor Alternative 7** has been identified as *the Preferred Alternative* in the Draft Tier 1 EIS (See Figure).
- The *Selected Alternative* will be identified in the Final EIS/Record of Decision (ROD) document, which is anticipated for Summer 2021



Tier 1 EIS – Environmental Effects of Preferred Alternative *(1 of 3)*

RESOURCE AREA	IMPACT IDENTIFICATION
Transportation	Beneficial effects on the transportation system have been identified and no mitigation strategies are proposed for this Tier 1 level analysis.
Land Use	Coordinate with local government entities as appropriate to minimize the potential for land use conflicts.
Socio-economic Conditions, Displacements/ Relocations	Socioeconomic impacts of the preferred alignment were identified at a corridor level.
Environmental Justice and Title VI	<p>Throughout the Tier 1 EIS process, FHWA and ADOT engaged in public participation efforts with the general public.</p> <p>The Tier 1 EIS only identifies areas with high concentration of minority and low-income populations. Specific information needed to make disproportionate high and adverse effect determinations was not available.</p>
Economic Resources	Effects identified at the regional level include economic influence of a major construction project and the effects of the associated induced activity.

Tier 1 EIS – Environmental Effects of Preferred Alternative *(2 of 3)*

RESOURCE AREA

IMPACT IDENTIFICATION

Section 4(f) Resources	Preferred alternative tries to avoid Section 4(f) properties where they were identified.
Cultural Resources	The stipulations of the current draft PA (see Appendix E) address specific requirements for further studies of cultural resources, which would occur during Tier 2. FHWA is continuing to work with the Section 106 consulting parties and would execute the PA prior to issuing a ROD for the Tier 1 EIS process.
Air Quality	Tier 1 findings at the corridor level show pollutant reduction from reduced travel times, effect of corridor length, and recognize the need to minimize the effects of creating hot spots such as interchanges in receptor-sensitive areas.
Noise and Vibration	Undeveloped lands within the study area have been identified with predicted noise levels, categorized based on zoning and documented in the Draft Tier 1 EIS.
Hazardous Materials	Known hazardous materials sites and generators within the study area have been identified through regulatory data base searches and are documented in this Draft Tier 1 EIS.

Tier 1 EIS – Environmental Effects of Preferred Alternative (3 of 3)

RESOURCE AREA

IMPACT IDENTIFICATION

Geology, Soils, and Prime and Unique Farmlands

Topography was considered during the alternatives development process to minimize the potential need for cut (excavation) and fill (building up embankments).

Biological Resources

Designated Critical Habitats were considered as part of the Tier 1 EIS but no designated critical habitats exist within any of the corridor alternatives to date.

Water Resources

Alternatives were developed to have a more perpendicular crossing of watercourses and floodplains. Known wetlands were avoided where possible.

Visual and Aesthetic Resources

Corridor-level assessment of visual effects is limited to park/recreation areas and natural/scenic landscapes at this stage of analysis. The emphasis is primarily on desert and distant mountain landscape features with man-made elements

Note: Each Tier 1 corridor alternative is 2,000 feet wide and the assumed right-of-way for a future facility alignment would be a maximum of 400 feet wide. The use of broad 2,000-foot-wide corridor alternatives in the Tier 1 analysis gives FHWA and ADOT the flexibility to identify and refine the specific roadway alignment within the corridor if a Corridor Alternative is ultimately selected. At that time, development of the specific alignment and more detailed design would provide an opportunity to avoid or minimize impacts to the natural and human environments.

Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (1 of 2)

- Cultural resources exist within all 3 Corridor Alternatives. Identified cultural resources were documented in a Class I Inventory Report
- Section 106 effect determinations were not made in the Draft Tier 1 EIS. Effect determinations will be made in Tier 2 environmental studies
- The Class I Inventory Report was consulted on with Section 106 consulting parties
- A Draft Programmatic Agreement (PA) has been developed because future Tier 2 projects may have the potential to adversely affect cultural resources

Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (2 of 2)

- The Draft PA defines and outlines how future Tier 2 projects will be carried out to satisfy requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA
 - ❖ The Draft PA can be found in Appendix E of the Draft Tier 1 EIS
- Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d), your input on the study's Section 106 consultation process (Section 3.6 of the Draft Tier 1 EIS) and Draft PA is needed
- The Final PA will be executed prior to issuance of the Final EIS/ROD document

Relocations and Acquisitions

- Property relocations and acquisitions will not occur at the Tier 1 level
- Property relocations and acquisitions, if needed, will be identified as part of future Tier 2 projects when a more specific highway alignment is established, if a Corridor Alternative is selected as a result of this Tier 1 Study
- Any necessary property relocation or acquisition will be performed under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970

Agency and Public Outreach

Agency Outreach:

- Pre Scoping meetings
- Scoping
- Study milestone coordination meetings

Public Outreach:

- Scoping
- Public meetings
- Public Hearing and engagement (now)

Tribal Outreach

- Tribal Involvement of Tohono O'odham Nation, San Xavier District, San Xavier Allottee Association, and Gaming Enterprise
- Study team organized San Xavier District allottee meetings and attended San Xavier District community events
- Study team issued a survey to affected allottees seeking input on the proposed corridor in the San Xavier District (Alternative 1)

Next Steps

- End of the public comment period – January 8, 2021 (last day to submit any comments)
- Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ Record of Decision (ROD) – Anticipated for Summer 2021:
 - The Final Tier 1 EIS/ROD will reflect any changes to the Draft Tier 1 EIS as needed as a result of comments received
 - The Final EIS/ROD will identify the *Selected Alternative* for the study

Comments on the Draft Tier 1 Environmental Study

- The project team is now accepting formal comments on the Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- You may provide an oral comment in front of a panel of study team members
- A court reporter for you to provide a verbal comment is available as well
- All comments will be limited to 3 minutes
- Any oral or verbal comment received will be included and addressed in the Final EIS/ROD

Other ways to submit your comments

Telephone: 1.855.712.8530 (Toll Free)

Email: sonorancorridor@azdot.gov

Mail: Sonoran Corridor Tier 1 EIS Study Team
c/o Joanna Bradley
1221 S. Second Ave., Mail Drop T100,
Tucson, AZ 85713

Online: azdot.gov/sonorancorridor