



**Next Move Arizona
Statewide Listening Tour**

**North Central Arizona Economic Development Focus Group
Meeting Notes**

November 5, 2025

Attendees

ADOT and Consultant Team

- Matt Moul, Multimodal Planning Director
- Ruth Garcia, Regional Transportation Planner
- Kristin Darr, Consultant Team Facilitator
- Jennifer Love, Consultant Project Manager

Agency and Public Participants

- Guillermo Cortes, Ardurra
- John Saltonsall, Coconino County Economic Development
- Joe Galli, Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce
- Julie Pasterick, Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce

Welcome

- Matt opened the meeting with a welcome, and Kristin kicked off the conversation with a discussion of the connection between transportation and economic development.

Discussion

- The need for a new interchange design at Butler, suggesting a roundabout or series of roundabouts.
- The volume of large trucks in northern Coconino County (non-interstates) and associated issues, particularly vehicles competing with large trucks in areas with alternating turn lanes/climbing/passing lanes.
- Congestion issues on I-40 all the way to University Heights; particularly at access points, in turning lanes and due to lack of adequate space.
- Lack of resources (capacity, interchanges) leading to unmet needs, growing needs and new needs.
- Driver outreach and education to change behavior.
- Some of the area's facilities should have two lanes in each direction (avoiding or eliminating alternating turn lanes).
- US 89 from Flagstaff to Page/Bitter Springs: an area that could benefit from an additional lane, and is currently perceived to be dangerous due to alternating passing



lanes and lane use variations throughout the area. (Bitter Springs to the Cut – alternating lanes, then from the Cut to Page, one lane)

- US 89 from Flagstaff to Page/Bitter Springs: The area north of Cameron has poor roadway quality and condition, presents safety risks, and has a high frequency of crashes.
- Interest in ADOT being in compliance with local ordinances and practices supporting dark skies.
- Lack of HURF funds in Flagstaff and a general desire to see more ADOT investment in northern Arizona.
- Importance of planning projects and expansion projects in response to potential growth, for example, JW Powell bridge area. ADOT building an ultimate condition in better coordination with local development plans.
- Belief that the Phoenix area has more funding and lobbying power for transportation through MAG.
- Concern about the length of time and costs required to complete a Traffic Impact Assessment on ADOT facilities through population centers.
- Need for increased responsiveness from ADOT on specific challenges; for example, at Woody Mountain where the city is pressing developers to put in an interchange and ADOT's position is unclear, process of approving interchange is unclear (referenced FHWA guidelines on spacing interchanges, distance to adjacent interchange). Developers need to know how to proceed with their proforma and ADOT can be unclear, and some in Flagstaff have communicated that spacing would be too close. There's no mechanism such as an impact fee for a developer to contribute to a future interchange.
- Need for Flagstaff to plan and accommodate for future growth (ex: bypasses, access to growth areas and Snowbowl).
- Flagstaff and ADOT continue discussions about turning over the Milton Road Corridor related to the Lone Tree interchange design, citing rising costs.
- Currently developing Lone Tree. With a more holistic approach to analysis of Lone Tree with the local network and origins/destinations could have been good reliever of Milton.
- Noted that additional transportation infrastructure-related costs are being put on developers.
- The Chamber of Commerce stresses the need for surface transportation improvements to support community growth.
- Importance of investment in flex lanes on I-17 for northern Arizona as a tool to continue to address growth in Yavapai and Coconino counties and as a tool to provide access to fast-growing communities like Phoenix and Las Vegas.
- There was a perception that Arizona has historically under planned transportation investments and that state senators have not prioritized pursuing additional federal transportation funding.
- Need for more relief routes and redundancy in network.
- Need for continued investment in I-17 to support northern Arizona's Flagstaff and Sedona areas.



- Discussed the Fourth Street widening project as a key development in the city's transportation network as it creates better circulation and provides alternatives to Milton Road and local interstate segments. Again mentioned the importance of the Lone Tree corridor for its ability to be a relief route to the airport, Butler and the east side of Flagstaff, and its importance to the business community.
- Discussed a study done on I-40 from Belmont to Twin Arrows due to anticipated additional traffic. Study identified importance of Belmont interchange and the city has worked with the federal government on a land exchange at Camp Navajo. Noted that a developer, Schuff Steel, owns property in the area and requires access in order to develop it. Discussions with Senator Kelly have occurred to try to fund roadway improvements to improve access to the base in the area and improve access to cross interstates.
- Conversation returned to the Butler area, where Little America owns 400 acres and ADOT is evaluating constructing a roundabout. Little America has communicated that if ADOT constructs a roundabout at that location, the hotel would reevaluate access to its property, inclusive of closing their truck stop. The City of Flagstaff has identified Little America access further east than it is currently, and this may not align with the hotel's preferred access plan.
- Discussed the Twin Arrows (Glittering Mountain development) area where the Navajo Nation has bought property for a potential larger development in the future. Navajo Nation has also bought property at Cosnino. If these areas are developed, improvements to the interchanges would be needed. These could also increase traffic on I-40.
- Major investments in Holbrook and Winslow areas have increased traffic on I-40.
- Similar investments may be needed from Flagstaff and Kingman on I-17 between Camp Verde and the Mogollon Rim to accommodate large truck traffic.
- Discussion turned to connections between regions and the important role this connectivity plays for business and community.
- Noted that WL Gore, a major employer in Flagstaff, has many employees in the Deer Valley area, and that there are some other smaller businesses in Deer Valley and Flagstaff that would benefit from better connectivity on I-17. This area relies heavily on tourism, some of which are going to the Grand Canyon (facilitated in part by a weekly flight from Los Angeles). However, tourists are generally traveling by car from central and southern Arizona.
- Southbound Camp Verde was reported as one of the biggest frustrations, and participants questioned if there are plans to improve the area where Camp Verde exits to switchbacks, due to people using the exit lane as a passing lane.
- Anticipated that the growth in northern Phoenix will increase pressure on northern Arizona due to increased tourism and vacation homes.
- Some discussion about the current status of ADOT's I-11 project, as this corridor's improvements are perceived as a possible pressure reliever for I-17/I-40 freight traffic.
- Leaving Wickenburg to the north was cited as a particularly challenging area until drivers reach the divided portion of the highway.
- A vision for the region was communicated: no more two-lane roads.



- Tourism was discussed at length, as well as the role of outdoor recreation in the state and local economy. Safe access to these sites is critical, particularly the North Rim route/89A from Bitter Springs to Fredonia, and this route's connection to Page.
- AZ 511, which provides up-to-date traffic information for the state, was mentioned as an important resource that would benefit from better promotion and increased language access.
- The Navajo Nation is planning development at Horseshoe Bend.
- At Grey Mountain, a new mine reclamation project (carbon sequestration), as well as other projects like this one (including forestry projects) are putting pressure on regional highways through increased trucking.
- Manufacturing and machinery shops are expanding in Flagstaff, at the same time as people still drive to Phoenix for specialty products.
- More communication is requested on truck routes and hazmat routes, in general and related to increasing uranium transport.
- Noted that the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan is open for comment with a public hearing planned in January 2026.
- Participants shifted to a discussion of the importance of aviation for tourism and business development, noting that Flagstaff's FAA grant to extend runways to accommodate larger planes was critical. They also noted that ADOT's aeronautical fund is designed to be invested across the state to improve airport infrastructure.
- Shifting back to the business community, participants noted that housing is an issue for businesses looking to relocate or establish in the region, as the housing stock has traditionally grown less than the national/state average. Improved access has put more pressure on housing stock (for example, through acquisition of second/vacation homes). Housing costs are significantly higher than the national average. They noted that specifically, Belmont is growing. Glittering Mountain at Twin Arrows is adding 150 residential units. Winslow is looking at a need for workforce housing. Combined, these and other housing increases will add pressure on US 89 and I-40 due to increased commuter traffic, and compound existing challenges with freight traffic.
- In the context of all of these changes and growth areas, the importance of redundancy was again underscored. Alternatives are needed in the case of weather or crashes. Specific areas mentioned include I-40, where the alternative requires drivers to go back past Twin Arrows and the bypass has to go up and past Leupp. Another area mentioned is the commute up I-17 near Kachina and Mountaineer.
- Participants wondered if continuing I-17 north to Page has been studied.
- A final note suggested that adding a bridge near the Verde Valley School in the Sedona area would help with east-west connection and serve as bypass.

Key Takeaways

- Interest in a more holistic approach to modeling/circulation planning to understand redundancies in network and examining interstate access (number and spacing of ramps) to improve redundancy on network. These efforts and subsequent projects would ideally ultimately lead to improved traffic distribution and circulation along with reduced congestion and "pinch points". The effort would also identify needs in rural



areas where lack of redundancy can have severe impacts during incidents (weather, crashes).

- Interest in safer, multi-lane state routes.
- Discussion on the importance of considering topography and connectivity in routing.
- Interest in better understanding/deeper examination of how the transportation network can facilitate economic development and growth, and how to anticipate future transportation needs that may result in known growth areas (bridge improvements, new direct connections/interchanges).
- I-17 is a critical corridor in this area for business, community and tourism.