



# THE BRIEFING ROOM

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**June 11, 2013**

## ***Nevada, Arizona Officials See Progress on Interstate 11 Corridor Study***

*Press Release By*  
***Nevada Department of Transportation***  
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Image Source: <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:11.svg>

**LAS VEGAS** – Progress continues to be made on a study investigating a potential new interstate highway corridor linking Phoenix and Las Vegas. The corridor, named Interstate 11, is an economic development strategy that could dramatically improve opportunities to expand travel, trade and tourism in the western United States. The I-11 & Intermountain West Corridor Study, led by the Nevada (NDOT) and Arizona (ADOT) transportation departments, is a two-year, multiphase, high-level study examining the benefits, feasibility, opportunities and constraints of the proposed new interstate highway corridor.

When the study is completed in mid-2014, a final Corridor Concept Report will outline the feasibility of the interstate highway and define the next steps for the project, including a vision for extending the I-11 corridor north to Canada and south to Mexico. Ultimately, the study will justify whether or not the I-11 Corridor is a necessary addition to the nation's interstate highway system that should be pursued in the future. Today's study expands the original 1990s CANAMEX concept into a broad-based transportation solution that has the backing of federal, state and local governments.

### **Benefits of the Proposed I-11 Corridor**

The I-11 Corridor is more than simply a proposed high-speed highway linking Phoenix and Las Vegas. It has the potential to redefine transportation and commerce in the western United States by:

- Connecting metropolitan areas, trade hubs and deep-water ports;
- Placing Nevada and Arizona at the crossroads of emerging transcontinental commerce, trade and tourism routes between Mexico and Canada, and across the United States;
- Providing an alternative freight corridor to congested existing north-south highway corridors like I-5 and I-15;
- Providing infrastructure needed to respond to “nearshoring” — the manufacture of goods within North America instead of Southeast Asia;



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- Incorporating “smart” transportation technology, freight rail, passenger rail, public transportation and utility transmission lines;
- Creating jobs: \$1 billion in infrastructure = 30,000 jobs.

## Recent Achievements

In August 2012, Phase I of the study was completed. A Corridor Vision Summary outlined previous transportation planning efforts, and set the foundation for the subsequent study phases and public communication program. The new interstate highway corridor study received support from the highest levels. In June 2012, Congress passed a transportation reauthorization bill — “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act” (MAP-21) — in which I-11 was formally designated as a part of the interstate highway system. Closer to home, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer proclaimed the development of the interstate corridor is one the state’s long-term goals and the Nevada Legislature adopted a resolution in support of I-11.

Influential organizations are putting their weight behind the corridor study. The I-11 Coalition is a nonprofit group of private citizens and civic leaders from Nevada and Arizona promoting the corridor concept throughout the region. The Transportation and Trade Corridor Alliance (TTCA), a partnership between ADOT, the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Arizona Commerce Authority, is looking at changes in international trade patterns. The I-11 Corridor could provide a critical transportation linkage in potential economic scenarios created by improvements to the Panama Canal, increased trade with Latin America and additional Mexican port capacity. NDOT and ADOT are actively interacting with citizens and stakeholders to collect input and opinions on the project. Since the study was initiated in September 2012, more than 200 community members in Nevada and Arizona have expressed their opinions through the public meeting process, and almost 300 stakeholders representing 160 agencies and organizations are actively engaged in the study. Stakeholder subject matter experts formed focus groups to tackle seven key study topics, from which several consistent thoughts emerged:

1. **Global Competition:** The I-11 Corridor can improve the economic competitiveness of Nevada and Arizona by placing the region at the crossroads of intercontinental trade routes from Mexico, Canada and the West Coast.
2. **Nearshoring:** This trend — the manufacturing of goods near the region in which they are marketed — will require the additional trade routes created by the I-11 Corridor.
3. **Multimodal Use:** One corridor can serve as the route for highway, rail lines and utility lines, all contained in one strip of land to reduce environmental impacts.
4. **Smart Technologies:** A new interstate highway would provide the platform for emerging transportation technologies and state-of-the-art safety strategies.
5. **Funding:** The largest challenge to implementation will be funding and financing.



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- Developing private-public partnerships may be necessary, and federal funding opportunities may increase if there is significant support from a variety of agencies and partners.
- Advanced planning may provide opportunities for new/alternate funding streams.
- Potential funding sources could include fee-based HOV lanes and tolls.

## Next Steps

By mid-2013, Phase II of the I-11 & Intermountain West Corridor Study will create a Corridor Justification Report to outline the characteristics affecting the corridor — such as population, employment, economic diversity, freight movement — that will be needed to evaluate the location and type of an enhanced transportation facility. In addition to using accepted projections about the future, alternative scenarios will be developed that describe probable trends that could affect the region, and that may influence the need for I-11.

Through the second half of 2013 and early 2014, an alternative analysis will be conducted of possible alignments and modes. The study is on track to be completed in mid-2014, with the final Corridor Concept Report wrapping up the study effort by stating the ultimate purpose and need, recommending potential corridor segment routes and outlining project implementation requirements. Whether the I-11 Corridor project moves forward depends on the study results. If the interstate highway corridor can be properly justified and has a sound business case for further development, the project's next stages include the required environmental and engineering studies. NDOT and ADOT already have a jump start on the environmental approval process in preparation for the Environmental Impact Statement.

A critical step prior to the Environmental Impact Statement is the identification of reliable funding sources. This will require dedicated support from the region and the states at both the governmental and private-sector levels. The I-11 Coalition, joined by government officials, and transportation and trade industry leaders, are out front making the public and private connections necessary to generate future funding sources. Although U.S. 93 between Phoenix and Las Vegas has been designated as the future I-11 corridor under MAP-21, no specific routes have been drawn and no final decisions have been made. What is certain is that the I-11 route will utilize the Mike O'Callaghan – Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge, a structure designed to interstate highway standards and completed in 2010 to bypass Hoover Dam.

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