

CANAMEX CORRIDOR

INTRODUCTION

The North American Free Trade Agreement created a preferential trade relationship between Canada, Mexico and the United States. A key component of its successful implementation is the efficient flow of goods, services, people and information between the participating nations. Trade corridors are geographically designated areas that facilitate the national and transnational movement of goods, services, people and information.

The CANAMEX Corridor is one of 43 national corridors identified in the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, the 1995 National Highway System (NHS) Designation Act and the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) as “high priority” corridors. The NHS Designation Act specifies the CANAMEX Corridor to run from “Nogales, Arizona, through Las Vegas, Nevada, to Salt Lake City, Utah, to Idaho Falls, Idaho, to Montana, to the Canadian Border.”

Key Elements of the CANAMEX Corridor

The CANAMEX Trade Corridor will be distinguished by the development of five distinct elements:

- **Physical Infrastructure** - The key goal of CANAMEX is the development of a continuous four-lane highway from Mexico City to Edmonton, Canada following the route established by Congress. The highway requires multi-modal enhancements as well as efficient ports of entry. This includes roads and telecommunications infrastructure.
- **Commercial Infrastructure** - This includes transportation entities and distribution warehouses as well as regionally integrated technological infrastructure such as corridor-wide trade databases and electronic transportation information systems. The transportation and distribution industries are being impacted by e-commerce. The ability to access multiple markets is essential.
- **Business and Professional Services** - Efficient trade movement requires the availability of various professional services including internal finance and legal expertise, customs brokers, consultants, as well as the support of academia.
- **Social, Political and Business Linkages** - Preservation and sustainability of the CANAMEX region is important to all sectors. By investing in linkages between the relevant governmental institutions, business sectors and social organizations and entities, CANAMEX can channel growth and development in a way that is consistent with local development values and planning policies.

Hoover Dam Bypass

The CANAMEX Corridor follows I-19 from Nogales to Tucson, I-10 from Tucson to Phoenix, U.S. 93 in the vicinity of Phoenix to Las Vegas and I-15 from Las Vegas through Montana to the Canadian border. The present route of U.S. 93 uses the top of Hoover Dam to cross the Colorado River. According to the CANAMEX Corridor Project, the traffic congestion caused by the inadequacy of the existing highway across the dam imposes a serious economic burden on the states of Arizona, Nevada and Utah. Other alternative four-lane commercial routes between Arizona, Nevada and Utah are through California, an additional 250 miles. U.S. 93 cannot accommodate all of the traffic where it crosses the top of Hoover Dam. To remedy this, the Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with affected state and federal agencies is proposing to bypass Hoover Dam with a new bridge crossing of the Colorado River.

The Hoover Dam Bypass project is considering three alternative crossings to bypass the Hoover Dam. The "No-Build" alternative is considered a fourth alternative. These alternatives differ in cost, scope, environmental impact and a number of other factors. The Sugarloaf Mountain Alternative won the majority of support at all levels, has the least amount of environmental impact of the three "build" alternatives studied, and successfully meets the main objectives of the project. The estimated cost to design and construct this 1,900 foot-long bridge and 3.5 miles of roadway is \$198 million. The facility will consist of a 4-lane highway and bridge, with a design speed of 60 miles per hour. The proposed bridge crossing is approximately 1,500 feet downstream or south of Hoover Dam.

TEA-21 provides \$41 million for the Hoover Dam Bypass Project under the "High Priority Projects Program". This federal program requires the states to match the federal dollars with 20 percent state funds. Arizona and Nevada are drafting an agreement for dividing the non-federal share.

Maricopa County Designation

While the CANAMEX Corridor has been defined in federal legislation as a national trade route extending from Canada to Mexico, the exact location of the route through Maricopa County has yet to be specified. A joint study by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) was undertaken to select and develop a specific route for the CANAMEX Corridor in Maricopa County. The evaluation assessed and ranked each alternative route using the following ten evaluation criteria:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Capital cost of land acquisition and construction | 6. Constructability |
| 2. Travel time | 7. Safety |
| 3. Route length | 8. Environmental impacts |
| 4. Level of service | 9. Title VI impacts |
| 5. Access to freight terminals | 10. Major community impacts |

The MAG-ADOT Joint Draft Recommendation for the CANAMEX Corridor is: I-8, SR 85, I-10, the Sun Valley Parkway (extended north to US 60), US 60, the Wickenburg Bypass and US 93. As a result of the review of the MAG-ADOT draft recommendation in a stakeholder forum, the recommendation has been revised to only specify a leading candidate for the southern section of the corridor and to recommend further study before designating the complete corridor. The leading candidate for the southern section of the route through Maricopa County is from I-8 to SR 85, then SR 85 to the junction with I-10. No leading candidate for the connection from I-10 to the US 60/US 93 corridor is being recommended at this time.

The final designation of the corridor requires joint approval of the MAG Regional Council and the State Transportation Board (STB). Upon approval by MAG and STB, the designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region will be recommended for incorporation into federal legislation as a component of the federally designated CANAMEX Corridor. This action would make the Maricopa region portion of the CANAMEX Corridor eligible for federal funding for the High Priority Corridors in the National Highway System.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CANAMEX Trade Corridor: www.CANAMEX.org

TEA-21 Legislation: www.fhwa.dot.gov

ADOT
(602) 712-7227
www.dot.state.az.us