



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Nevada Department of Transportation is initiating an Alternatives Analysis effort for the Interstate 11 (I-11) Corridor between the northwestern edge of Las Vegas and I-80 in western Nevada. This will lead to the recommendation of one or more corridor alternatives to advance into future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies. The planning and outreach process, analysis, and findings will be documented in a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) document.

- **What is the purpose of this study?** This study will identify and evaluate a range of corridor alternatives based on transportation, environmental, and other criteria. The optimal corridor alternative(s) will be advanced into NEPA for detailed environmental review in the future. The PEL process provides the future NEPA study team with documentation on the outcomes of the alternatives analysis process, including the history of decisions made and the level of analysis undertaken.
- **What is a PEL?** PEL is a federally recognized process that is used to identify transportation issues, along with environmental concerns, in a corridor or a specific location. It is generally conducted before any project construction phasing is identified, and before specific solutions are known. PEL studies can be used to make planning decisions based on planning analysis and stakeholder outreach. These decisions can be used to identify and prioritize future projects, develop the purpose and need for a project, determine project size or length, and/or develop and evaluate project alternatives.
- **How is PEL different than NEPA?** In a NEPA study, a transportation project is more clearly defined and the environmental review must address all regulatory requirements, documenting the affected environment, environmental consequences of the proposed action, indirect/cumulative impacts, and mitigation measures for each Build Corridor Alternative as well as a No Build Alternative (“do nothing”). A single alternative is selected with enough design parameters to advance into detailed design and right-of-way preservation activities. PEL studies occur prior to NEPA and are conducted at a higher, less detailed level of analysis to inform subsequent NEPA efforts.
- **How long is this study and what is the outcome?** This Alternatives Analysis effort is expected to take approximately six months, ending in late summer or early fall of 2018. A study report will document the alternatives development and analysis process, corridor recommendation(s), and outreach effort conducted. This will be paired with the series of three PEL checklists that provide a summary of activities to inform the future NEPA activities, including the history of decisions made and the level of analysis undertaken.
- **How is my input going to affect the decisions made?** We are at the earliest planning stages of this I-11 Corridor. The alternatives presented are just a starting point for discussion. Input received during this round of meetings will assist the project team in developing the universe of alternatives, and help us understand local issues, environmental constraints, and opportunities that can lead to the corridor that best serves the need for I-11.
- **What is the need for I-11?** The transportation network in the Intermountain West was developed decades ago to serve the economic, population, and mobility needs at that time—east-west movement of people and goods between Southern California and the rest of the country. As manufacturing and other value-added services shifts back to North America from East Asia, the need is now shifting to north-south demand, and the only existing north-south interstates in this region

are I-5 and I-15. Investment in regional transportation infrastructure has not kept pace with population growth and changing economic trends. Future projections indicate that the proposed I-11 Corridor will continue to see significant growth, prompting the need for better surface transportation connections to accommodate not only the travel demand between metropolitan areas, but also improved mobility for freight shipments throughout the Intermountain West. This Corridor could provide needed connectivity, offer alternative routes for freight and passenger traffic, and improve reliability for better trade and commerce opportunities. Developing a north-south multimodal corridor through Nevada provides the foundation for a renewed, stronger, diversified economy.

- **Is there funding (planned) for any portion of the project?** No funding is planned for this northern Nevada segment. Construction of I-11 between the Hoover Dam Bypass and Las Vegas is currently underway. In Arizona, improvements are underway to the US 93 corridor (the selected alignment for I-11).
- **How does funding become available to complete I-11?** Once a specific alignment is defined for I-11 (usually as an outcome of a NEPA study), the corridor may be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), which allows the state to allocate funding or compete for federal grant opportunities. This study will identify feasible steps to advance into the NEPA process. Funding would likely come from several sources, including federal funds that come to NDOT through various transportation programs, funds from the state gas tax, and/or other state financing mechanisms.
- **What's the timeline for I-11 getting built?** The I-11 Corridor will be constructed in phases, as funding becomes available. For this northern Nevada segment, continued planning and NEPA efforts are required to define a Preferred Alternative, and then design and right-of-way acquisition needs to occur before construction. Depending on funding availability, this process can vary from several years to several decades. The goal of this current study is to establish the path of I-11.
- **What is the business reason or return on investment of I-11?** The 2014 *I-11 and Intermountain West Corridor Study* completed a "Business Case" to establish the justification for constructing I-11 in Nevada and Arizona. The return on investment is assumed to be significant, but difficult to precisely quantify. The I-11 Corridor presents Arizona and Nevada with unique opportunities to sustain historic growth patterns by building on strong economic sectors such as tourism and recreation; tap into the resources of Mexico and Canada to strengthen and grow manufacturing capabilities; provide access to national and international markets for goods produced, warehoused, and distributed; and achieve the economic development and diversification vision for both states.

Estimated costs were compared against the potential travel and economic benefits of an I-11 Corridor. It was found that the Corridor could provide a potential \$24 billion economic benefit to the region, generating approximately 240,000 jobs. When combined with up to \$39 billion in potential travel benefits, the benefit far outweighs the costs needed to construct the corridor. More information is available online: http://i11study.com/IWC-Study/PDF/Business_Case_v21_withUpdatedAppendixA.pdf.

- **What's the difference between a "corridor alternative" and "alignment alternative"?** A corridor alternative is a route that connects point A to point B to point C. The exact specifics of how these connections are made are not established to the level of understanding if the corridor alternative will pass through a specific house or business. A corridor alternative may reflect a span of several miles. The purpose of evaluating corridor alternatives is to understand which one of many broad swaths best serves the corridor's purpose. An alignment alternative, however, is a specific route developed within a chosen corridor. For

example, once a corridor alternative is selected as the best route, various alignment alternatives will be developed to connect those points. Each alignment alternative may take a different route, such as using an existing corridor, developing a new corridor, or some combination thereof. Alignment alternatives are generally much more defined, such as one-half mile or less, to better understand potential impacts. The actual roadway footprint and location will be determined during the engineering/design phase of study.

- **Why are you looking at a 4-lane limited access highway and not something less (or more)?** The overarching need of I-11 as a transcontinental trade corridor is to improve passenger and freight mobility throughout the Intermountain West and between Mexico, the US, and Canada. To accommodate long-distance traffic, travel reliability is of the utmost importance. A limited access facility – one where access is accommodated through traffic interchanges, not driveways or intersecting streets with traffic signals – allows travelers to maintain a consistent travel speed. As demand warrants, segments may need additional travel lanes. For now, four lanes (two lanes per direction) allows I-11 to serve anticipated traffic needs.
- **Why do you show XYZ corridor bypassing my ABC community? This will kill my town!** The goal of I-11 is not to negatively impact any communities along the corridor, but rather complement community development. Alignments around towns are not being developed at this time because of the level of this PEL study, but based on feedback and concerns heard during the first round of public outreach, more explanation is being prepared to address these concerns. If a new route is recommended for I-11, it is because constructing a limited access, interstate highway in the middle of the town would have major detrimental impacts to local businesses and bisect the town. An interstate has no intersecting streets or driveways and access is obtained from traffic interchanges. Thus, the goal would be to construct I-11 nearby to continue to support community growth, provide local interchanges for travelers to stop in town, and maintain “main streets” as viable economic and community centers. For more information on this topic, see “What Happens in My Town” technical memorandum that has been developed for this project: <https://www.nevadadot.com/projects-programs/programs-studies/future-i-11-alternatives-analysis-las-vegas-valley-to-i-80/i-11-northern-nevada-alternatives-analysis-project-documents>
- **What happens in Las Vegas and beyond I-80?** The proposed route for I-11 through Las Vegas is being considered as part of the Southern Nevada Traffic Study, which is separate from this study. The recommendations will likely need to be analyzed in subsequent studies. I-80 was determined to be a logical termini – or end point – based on the congressional designation in the 2015 FAST Act which designated I-11 as an interstate highway between Las Vegas and I-80. Those limits are the focus of this study. However, coordination with neighboring states was conducted in the previous *I-11 and Intermountain West Corridor Study*, and further coordination will occur as part of future study efforts. For more information on this topic, see “What Happens North of I-80” technical memorandum that has been developed for this project: <https://www.nevadadot.com/projects-programs/programs-studies/future-i-11-alternatives-analysis-las-vegas-valley-to-i-80/i-11-northern-nevada-alternatives-analysis-project-documents>
- **Are you considering other modes such as rail or hyperloop?** The federal designation for I-11 is an interstate highway, so that mode will be the focus of this study. Within the context of I-11 Corridor planning, the goal of implementing a multimodal corridor would be to form the same connections along the long-distance route (not necessarily within the same alignment), however to the extent possible, the analysis will consider the suitability of the corridor alternatives to accommodate a future multimodal facility. Part of the study criteria for the corridor alternatives is to consider how they will interact with other modes that are planned, proposed, or already in place. This could also

include other emerging technologies, such as developing the right infrastructure for autonomous vehicles or truck platooning.

- **Why are we just studying the US 95 corridor? What about US 93?** The 2014 joint NDOT/Arizona DOT *I-11 and Intermountain West Corridor Study* completed a high level screening of connectivity options between the Congressionally-designated portion of I-11 (Phoenix to Las Vegas) to the northern Nevada border, establishing the best location to continue to advance the corridor north to Canada. It was determined that a connection through the western side of the state had the ability to best serve freight and passenger traffic and support statewide economic development goals. This recommendation was supported and approved by the NDOT Transportation Board, which led to the extension of the Congressional designation of I-11 from Las Vegas to I-80 in western Nevada, generally following the US 95 corridor, as named in the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). US 93 remains a critical transportation corridor for statewide mobility and will continue to be improved, as needed, by NDOT to support regional and statewide transportation goals.
- **How did you come up with these corridor alternatives? What information/data, tools or techniques did you use?** The proposed I-11 Corridor in Northern Nevada extends approximately 450 miles. The Congressional designation of I-11 is generally along the US 95 corridor between Las Vegas and I-80. Therefore, alternatives will follow (co-locate) or be located in the nearby vicinity. Major factors contributing to the development of this initial universe of alternatives includes topography (interstates require relatively flat grade); land management patterns (avoid traversing federally protected lands, like US Forest Service); and community impacts (avoid negatively impacting local main streets by constructing an interstate highway in downtown areas, if a reasonable alternative exists to complement the town instead).
- **Why are we limiting options to just US 95 from Vegas to Tonopah (Segment A)?** Congressional legislation designates the I-11 Corridor in Northern Nevada generally following the US 95 corridor from northwest Las Vegas to I-80. Only one corridor is viable in this vicinity because of the topography and land management patterns (e.g., mountains, military land, forest service lands). However, within this US 95 corridor, there is flexibility to review options co-located with US 95 and/or surrounding cities/towns, with the intent to support community development and not negatively impact town centers.