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On November 12, 2009 the Arizona Department of Transportation held an open house at the High Country Conference Center in Flagstaff, AZ to show the public what Arizona's transportation system might look like in the year 2050.

ADOT envisions the future of transportation in Arizona

by Carl Jackson

SEDONA, AZ (November 16, 2009) - It's a rare occasion when I wind my way up Oak Creek Canyon to cover a story in Flagstaff, but recently I read that the Arizona Department of Transportation was holding a public forum about how transportation might look in Arizona in the year 2050, 40 years from now, when our state's population is expected to at least double to 12 million, and could reach as high as 16 million people.

The population of Yavapai County alone is expected to grow from 200,000 in 2005 to over 1 million people by 2050.

The open house was held in a large open room at the High Country Conference Center in Flagstaff, AZ on November 12, 2009, one of three public open houses ADOT is holding throughout the state. All around were poster boards on easels with maps of Arizona detailing possible new or upgraded transportation routes.

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I have to admit that I was intrigued by the topic (will there be hover crafts in 40 years?) and impressed that ADOT is thinking ahead.

Although 40 years may sound like a long time, if the SR179 construction in Sedona is any indication, widening our roads and building out a transportation infrastructure throughout the state is going to take time.

Turns out that ADOT officials were impressed too.

Said one official, "This is the first time we've ever held a public forum on how Arizona might look in 40 years. [Former Governor] Napolitano asked us to start thinking about this issue several years ago. For a long time ADOT just thought about highways. But that has evolved. Now we're thinking about how light rail, busses, mixed use development, and highways can be used to solve our transportation needs in the future."

ADOT's vision is to imagine how Arizona residents and visitors will live, work, and play in the future; and map out the types of possible routes to make it easier for them to get where they want to go ([ADOT vision map](#)).

ADOT is thinking multimodal. That means considering rail, bus, auto, air, pedestrian and bicycle; and how a transportation infrastructure can be built that preserves our natural environment.

It also means thinking about the places that tourists visit most often, what types of transportation our businesses will require to ship their products, where/how residents might be living and shopping, and how the state's geography can best be used to accommodate a transportation infrastructure.

Rest assured, ADOT is not going to be building a light right system on Wilson Mountain.

However, ADOT is predicting extreme congestion problems along I-17 in the future and moderate/extreme congestion on SR89A.

I-17 will likely be widened; and an intercity bus system might run through Sedona that would connect us to Flagstaff, Prescott, and even Phoenix. A major "Park-and-Ride" facility where transit riders can park their private vehicles and transfer to mass transit is also being considered. ([ADOT Northern Arizona Transportation Study](#))

Said Laura Douglas, ADOT's Public Information Officer, "Building a Quality Arizona, or bqAZ, began nearly two years ago as ADOT held community workshops around the state and asked residents what is important to them when it comes to developing our state's multi-modal transportation system 40 years into the future. Now, as we begin to transition from that vision into the 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan, we want communities to stay engaged in shaping our transportation future, a future that we must plan for now, as we look ahead to the challenges of population growth and transportation funding."

For information about how ADOT is visioning Arizona's transportation future, visit www.bqaz.gov.

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