

Public input sought for transportation planning in Arizona

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The Arizona Department of Transportation is inviting communities around the state, including Yuma, to help shape the future of transportation in Arizona by participating in a series of workshops.

In Yuma, the workshop will be offered twice Wednesday, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. and from 6 to 8:30 p.m., at the Pivot Point Conference Center - Yuma's newly completed conference center along the riverfront off Madison Avenue and 1st Street.

The same information will be presented at both sessions. The public is invited to attend one of the hands-on workshops and share their ideas for the future of transportation in the local community and across the state.

Arizona is one of the nation's fastest growing states as people move here from all over the country to start families and careers to build quality lives. This growth is presenting a challenge to provide the roads and transit services the state's residents need, according to transportation officials.

To stay abreast of the transportation needs of the state's growing population, the Arizona Department of Transportation began a statewide study early this year to focus on long-range needs. This study, Building a Quality Arizona, is divided into four regional framework studies: northern, western, eastern and central Arizona. Each regional study looks at ways to plan for growth, understand community development and economic patterns and be prepared for future transportation needs.

State Transportation Director Victor Mendez encourages Yuma-area residents to participate by joining the workshop and contributing their ideas.

"This a defining moment for us, for you and for future generations," he said in a news release. "Your participation will be the key to forging a successful transportation plan for your community that meets the needs of today and tomorrow."

He continued: "Transportation is a personal decision that impacts our daily lives and our community's ability to sustain itself economically. A good system of roads, transit and rail ensures prosperity and adds to our quality of life."

In the western part of the state, Mendez said, options being considered include improving freeways and highways, exploring transit opportunities to connect communities and launching regional bus service connecting Yuma to Phoenix.

These are just a few of the possible scenarios under consideration in western Arizona to improve the state's infrastructure through the years 2030 to 2050, he said. These multiple long-range visions are the result of a year-long collaborative process involving local jurisdictions, Native American communities, stakeholders and interested citizens.