

3.1 SUMMARY

The Arizona Department of Transportation, in collaboration with regional transportation planning entities, local jurisdictions, and stakeholders across Arizona, has developed a series of regional transportation framework studies:

- Eastern Regional Framework Study
- Western Regional Framework Study
- Northern Regional Framework Study
- Central Regional Framework Study (which covered roughly the eastern two-thirds of Pinal County and a portion of western Gila County, including Globe/Miami)

The regional transportation framework studies will provide input into a *Statewide Transportation Planning Framework*. The Statewide Framework, in turn, will present a comprehensive, multimodal transportation vision for the year 2050 as input to the State Long-Range Transportation Plan due in 2010.

Each regional transportation framework study developed three multimodal transportation scenarios in the context of environmental, commercial transportation, economic development, and Smart Growth considerations. These scenarios are:

- Scenario A – Personal Vehicle Mobility
- Scenario B – Transit Mobility
- Scenario C – Focused Growth

Each of the three scenarios builds on “baseline conditions,” which include projects in the current ADOT five-year program, local and regional capital improvement programs (CIP), and transportation improvement programs (TIP).

Scenario A – Personal Vehicle Mobility

Scenario A assumes a continuation of the existing approach of focusing on transportation solutions (primarily roadways) that assume that people will continue to drive their cars as the primary mode of transportation. This scenario was designed to be consistent with existing long-range land use plans of cities, towns and counties. It also assumes that vehicle technologies with clean and affordable fuels will become pervasive.

In the Central region, Scenario A includes widening and improvements to existing roadways as well as new roadways and high-capacity corridors. Examples include widening of I-10 to five lanes in each direction, construction of the proposed North-South Freeway from Eloy to Apache Junction, and construction of a new north-south corridor extending from Red Rock to Florence and connecting to existing SR 79 north of Florence. Scenario A also includes implementation of the Pinal County Regionally Significant Routes. Transit improvements in Scenario A include express buses along freeway corridors, local transit and circulator service in urbanized areas, and intercity buses on US 60 west of Globe and on SR77 south of Oracle Junction.

Scenario B – Transit Mobility

Scenario B assumes a considerable shift from personal vehicles to public transit, walking, and bicycling. These modes will become more prevalent choices largely in response to increasing fuel costs. However, this scenario also includes significant roadway

improvements. Like Scenario A, Scenario B was designed to be consistent with existing long-range land use plans of local jurisdictions.

In the Central region, Scenario B includes roadways consistent with the Pinal County Regionally Significant Routes Plan, improvements to existing roadways and new roadways and high-capacity corridors. However, several new roadways that are depicted as freeways in Scenario A have been downgraded to Arizona parkways in Scenario B. Transit improvements in Scenario B include passenger rail between Phoenix and Tucson, express bus service, and local transit and circulator service in urbanized areas. Intercity bus service is significantly expanded from Scenario A.

Scenario C – Focused Growth

Transportation improvements in Scenario C were developed under the premise that a substantial shift from personal vehicles to local travel using transit, bicycling, and walking will occur between now and 2050. This scenario assumes a growing trend toward a less auto dependent lifestyle that encourages a mix of land uses located closer to one another—and therefore, shorter trips. Transportation improvements in Scenario C encourage denser growth patterns in towns and cities under Smart Growth principles. Thus, unlike the first two scenarios, Scenario C envisions future land use that differs from existing long-range plans. Scenario C combines a mix of technology improvements, increased public transit use, and increased walking and bicycling. This scenario includes significant transit and passenger rail service as well as roadway improvements.

In the Central region, Scenario C supports directing future growth to urban corridors (primarily located west of SR 79), while preserving open space and environmentally sensitive areas east of SR 79. Scenario C includes fewer high-capacity highway and freeway corridors. Instead, infrastructure investment is focused toward existing corridors, such as improving I-10 to five lanes in each direction.

Evaluation of Scenarios

The scenarios were evaluated using criteria that were developed to reflect framework goals and objectives:

- Maximize mobility and access
- Maximize transportation and land use integration
- Minimize environmental and conservation impacts
- Maximize economic benefits
- Maintain and enhance safety

The evaluation of scenarios in the Central region demonstrated that:

- Scenario A provides the most personal vehicle mobility, with the least traffic delay and congestion overall.
- Scenario B and C are most supportive of land use/transportation integration.
- Scenario A is likely to have the greatest economic benefit to key industries.
- Scenario A has the highest number of access-controlled facilities, which provide a significant safety benefit.
- Scenario C reduces greenhouse gas emissions the most, and A the least. On the other hand, Scenario A yields the lowest vehicle hours of travel and hence the greatest energy savings compared to the existing plus committed network.
- Scenario C has the greatest level of mobility choice overall.