

RURAL ARIZONA TRANSPORTATION DEMANDS AND CHALLENGES ISSUE PAPER

The following are bullet points provided by RTAC to ADOT Director Victor Mendez for his testimony to the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission provided on January 24, 2007:

- Arizona has been one of the fastest growing states in the Nation for the last several decades and is anticipated to continue in that capacity for at least the next 20 years.
- Despite massive investments, including State and local resources, infrastructure is already strained to meet current mobility and public safety needs.
- Compounding current stresses are the projections that the state population will double in approximately 20 years and economic activity will also dramatically increase.
- The need for additional infrastructure to meet future needs is exacerbated by the current stresses to the system.
- Unlike many regions of the Nation where transportation needs are predominantly maintenance, the Southwest has relatively new growth and still has significant new construction needs in addition to maintenance.
- For example, Phoenix and Las Vegas are the two fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States, are relatively close to one another, and yet are not directly connected by an interstate.
- In addition to massive internal growth, most of the commercial traffic from the ports and commerce generated in southern California to the rest of the Country moves through Arizona.
- The CANAMEX Corridor linking the United States, Mexico and Canada also passes through Arizona.
- Transportation needs in rural Arizona are also challenged by the needs in the Phoenix and Tucson areas. Resources are finite and the explosive needs and demands in the urban area compete directly with the rural needs.
- Rural and urban transportation needs also share a symbiotic relationship as the growth in Phoenix and Tucson considerably adds to the strain on the rural transportation infrastructure.
- Greater population and increased economic activity in the urban centers equates to more people and commerce moving both to and from those urban areas through the rest of the State utilizing the rural infrastructure.
- In addition to the need to get from point A to Point B, or from the Arizona eastern border to the western, many rural regions of Arizona are also experiencing explosive growth and face the identical urban challenges of mobility, congestion and public safety.