SUN CORRIDOR MPO
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2050 UPDATE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADOPTED MARCH, 2024

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES 2050

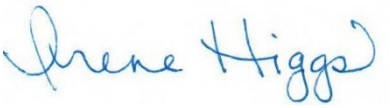
SunCorridor Metropolitan Planning Organization

WILSON & COMPANY

LETTER FROM SUN CORRIDOR MPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization's Executive Director, I am pleased to present the Sun Corridor's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2050 Update. The Sun Corridor MPO was formed in 2013, after the 2010 U.S. Census determined that the City of Casa Grande had reached a population over 50,000. Our MPO represents portions of unincorporated Pinal County and the cities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, and Eloy. The RTP is a coordinated system of the region's transportation facilities needed through 2050. This plan identifies an investment strategy and a project selection and prioritization process to guide how federal funds are spent on transportation improvements within the region and is fiscally constrained. It provides a vision for how projects will be developed in the future, to connect and serve all residents and visitors. A performance-based planning approach is reflected in the RTP to monitor how the region is improving transportation and reflects a state and national emphasis to ensure that citizens receive results from their tax dollars. Recognizing the very limited funding available for agencies and jurisdictions throughout the state, our recommended investment strategy emphasizes increasing safety and efficiency through system modernization and preserving our current infrastructure. Sun Corridor MPO member agencies will partner to select projects that improve access to employment centers, connect freight to major transportation corridors, and drive economic development in the region. With our regional partners and citizens, we look forward to continuing to improve transportation options in the Sun Corridor MPO region.

Sincerely,



Irene Higgs, Executive Director

LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN OF SUN CORRIDOR MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Sun Corridor MPO has worked hard to develop a Regional Transportation Plan 2050 Update that reflects the priorities and concerns of all the member jurisdictions in the region. As economic development occurs in the area, this plan focuses strongly on safety improvements and modernization and maintaining existing infrastructure yet provides sufficient flexibility to modernize and expand the transportation system as needed.

As Chairman of the Sun Corridor MPO Regional Transportation Plan Technical Advisory Committee, I would like to thank the committee members for their hard work in developing the plan, and members of the public who participated in stakeholder outreach, local government presentations, and public meetings for the plan.

Sincerely,

Duane Eitel, Chairman

This report was funded in part through grant(s) from the Federal Highway Administration and/or Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. The contents of this report reflect the views and opinions of the author(s) who is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily state or reflect the official views or policies of the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Arizona Department of Transportation, or any other State or Federal Agency. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Name	Description
ACIP	Airport Capital Improvement Plan	A capital improvement program developed for each airport that outlines future airport improvement projects
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability
ADOT	Arizona Department of Transportation	State transportation agency
ADT	Average Daily Traffic	Traffic counts made every three years on all functionally classified roadways in the MPO. FHWA requirement
ARAN	Automatic Road Analyzer	A leading highway/roadway data collection system
AV	Automated Vehicle	A driverless vehicle
BG	Block Group	A geographic area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau made up of a number of census blocks
CAG	Central Arizona Governments	Council of Governments serving Gila County and part of Pinal County
CART	Central Arizona Regional Transit	Regional transit service provided by the City of Coolidge
COMET (MET)	City of Maricopa Express Transit	Provides weekly transit service to the Banner Regional Medical Center in Casa Grande
CT	Census Tract	A geographic area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau made up of a number of block groups
EJ	Environmental Justice	Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
EV	Electric Vehicle	A vehicle that uses electric motors for propulsion
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration	Provides funding for aviation projects

Acronym	Name	Description
FAST Act	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act	Federal legislation for surface transportation programs, enacted December 4, 2015
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	Provides funding for planning
FTA	Federal Transit Administration	Provides funding for transit projects
GA	General Aviation	Type of airport using non-scheduled commercial passenger service
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual	A publication by the Transportation Research Board that serves as a reference for the capacities of roadway segments and intersections
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Federal agency responsible for protecting the health of Americans
HPMS	Highway Performance Monitoring System	Yearly road information system for functionally classified roads
HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program	Local and state funding for safety projects
HURF	Highway User Revenue Funds	State funds that are distributed to cities, towns, and counties
LOS	Level of Service	A letter grade (A-F) assigned to roadway segments or intersections to indicate the amount of congestion
MAG	Maricopa Association of Governments	The regional MPO for the Phoenix metropolitan area
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century	Federal legislation for multimodal transportation, enacted July 6, 2012
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization	Agency formed to provide transportation planning in a region or area that reaches 50,000 in population
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices	FHWA's standards for traffic control devices on all roadways and highways
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System	Standardized classification of business types
NEVI	National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	Federal program that provides funding to States to deploy Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure
NHFN	National Highway Freight Network	The primary freight network in the United States as defined by the FHWA
PASER	Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating	A system of pavement condition ratings

Acronym	Name	Description
RIS	Recommended Investment Strategy	Strategy for spending federal funds on preservation, modernization, and capacity projects
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority	A Pinal County organization responsible for spending funds from an excise tax on transportation improvements
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan	A long-term blueprint for the region's transportation system, which is a federal requirement for funding
SCMPO	Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization	The MPO for the communities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, Eloy, and portions of unincorporated Pinal County
STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant	Federal funding program to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any federal-aid highway, bridge, and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects
STP	Surface Transportation Program	Federal funding for states to improve road, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure
STSP	Strategic Transportation Safety Plan	A transportation safety plan that aims to improve multimodal safety within the region
TA	Transportation Alternatives	The ADOT Transportation Alternatives Program provides funding to Greater Arizona through a competitive grant program and a distribution formula that allocates funding to communities based on population.
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee	The Sun Corridor MPO TAC comprises member agency representatives who provide insight into the planning needs of the region
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zone	A unit of geography used in transportation planning models

Acronym	Name	Description
TDM	Travel Demand Model	A computer model that forecasts future travel volumes based on demographic forecasts and existing travel patterns
TDMS	Transportation Data Management System	Software application administered by ADOT available to all local governments to upload traffic data
TERM	Transit Economic Requirements Model	An FTA scale ranking the condition of transit facilities
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program	Projects that are funded must be on the TIP in order to be programmed for construction and reimbursement
TWLTL	Two-Way Left-Turn Lane	A center lane exclusively for vehicles turning left in both directions
ULB	Useful Life Benchmark	The expected life cycle of a capital asset of a transit provider
UZA	Urbanized Areas	Defined areas by ADOT/FHWA based on population census. Reviewed every 10 years
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled	The amount of travel for all vehicles in a geographic region over a given period of time

1. Introduction

The Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (Sun Corridor MPO) was formed in 2013, after the 2010 U.S. Census determined that the City of Casa Grande had reached a population over 50,000.

Federal law requires that a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) be formed to provide transportation planning within designated boundaries. The Sun Corridor MPO encompasses 1,155 square miles and provides transportation planning services to the region that includes the cities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, and Eloy, as well as adjacent unincorporated portions of Pinal County. The 2023 population of the Sun Corridor MPO is more than 145,000, according to the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Travel Demand Model (TDM), which gets demographic projections from the Regional Analytics Division, and is anticipated to grow to nearly 440,000 over the next 25 years.

Sun Corridor MPO Executive Board

Sun Corridor member jurisdictions include the City of Casa Grande, City of Coolidge, City of Eloy, Arizona State Transportation Board, and Pinal County. These member jurisdictions constitute the voting members of the Sun Corridor MPO. There are also several ex-officio representatives of public agencies that work with the Sun Corridor MPO, which are the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). It is the function of the Executive Board to act as a policy body, coordinating transportation planning and related implementation activities within the Sun Corridor MPO transportation region.

Sun Corridor MPO RTP

The Sun Corridor MPO RTP defines the region's strategy for creating a regional transportation system that accommodates the current mobility needs of residents, while also looking to the future. It is a 30-year multimodal plan developed in conjunction with Sun Corridor MPO member jurisdictions, FHWA, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and Central Arizona Governments (CAG).

The RTP describes how federal transportation funds, provided to the Sun Corridor MPO, will be expended over the next 30 years within the Sun Corridor MPO planning area. The RTP is a financially constrained plan, meaning that projected expenditures are programmed consistent with anticipated revenue.

The RTP addresses all modes of transportation, including automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, truck, air, and rail movements. The RTP is updated once every four years, enabling the plan to evolve as the region continues to grow and develop. This Plan is an update of the RTP developed in March 2016 and subsequently updated in 2020.

A Regional Gateway

The Sun Corridor MPO region within the state of Arizona and Pinal County is shown in ***Figure 1-1***. Nestled between two major metropolitan areas (Phoenix and Tucson), two Native American communities, and one Native American nation, the Sun Corridor MPO region is an important gateway for regional, national, and international freight shipments.

Interstate 10 (I-10), which crosses the region in a northwest-southeast direction, is a cross-country interstate highway that extends from California to Florida. Interstate 8 (I-8), which extends in an east-west direction from Casa Grande to San Diego, California, is another key transportation facility.

The Sun Corridor MPO is in a unique position to develop partnerships that will enhance the region's ability to provide goods, services, and economic development strategies; improve local and regionally significant roads and transit systems; and plan for transportation improvements along I-8, I-10, and the potential future Interstate 11 (I-11) Intermountain West Corridor.

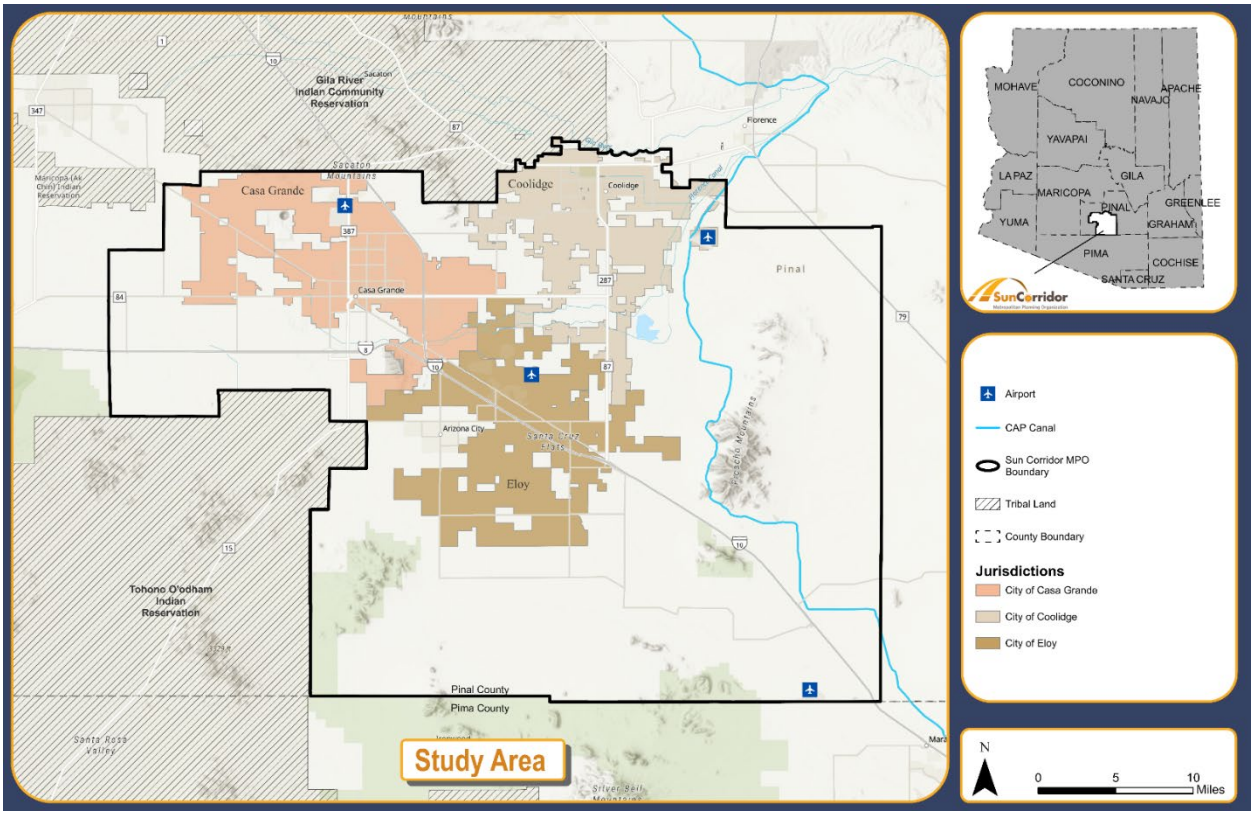


Figure 1-1. Sun Corridor MPO Region

An Integral Part of the Arizona Sun Corridor Megaregion

The Sun Corridor MPO region is part of a larger area termed the "Sun Corridor." This emerging megaregion, which is a clustered network of cities, shares a common desert environment, infrastructure systems, economic linkages, and other features. The Arizona Sun Corridor megapolitan area, shown in ***Figure 1-2***, extends from Prescott, Arizona to Nogales, Arizona and was home to more than 6.3 million people in 2022 (about the same population size as the state of Missouri). By 2050, the megapolitan area is projected to grow to more than 10 million people (about the current population size of Metropolitan Chicago). The Arizona Sun Corridor megaregion comprises all of Maricopa, Pinal, and Pima counties, with parts of Yavapai, Santa Cruz, and Cochise counties. The Arizona Sun Corridor is home to over 85 percent of Arizona's population.

Recognizing the tremendous growth and opportunities that lie before them, as well as the current funding and fiscal challenges for transportation and other infrastructure, the Sun Corridor MPO, representing portions of unincorporated Pinal County and the cities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, and Eloy, has developed this Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2050 Update.

This Sun Corridor MPO RTP emphasizes the regional cooperation required to improve and maintain the region's transportation infrastructure to best position the region for sustainable economic growth.

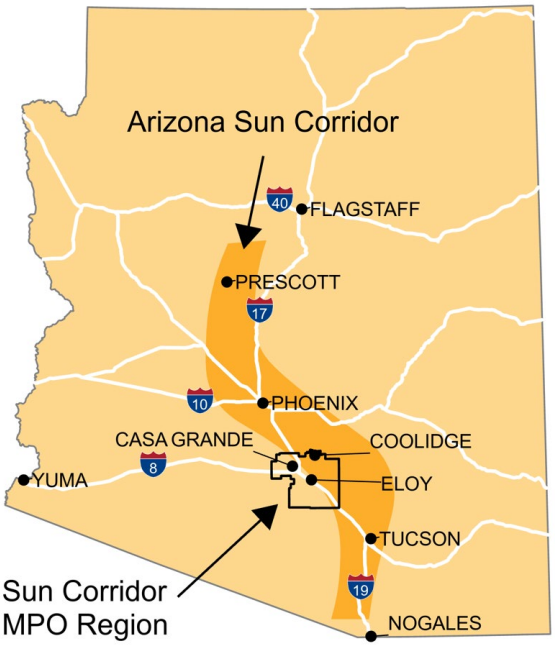
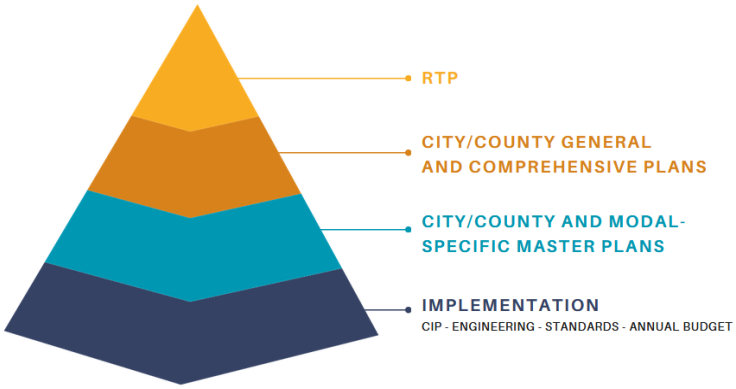


Figure 1-2. Arizona Sun Corridor Megaregion

What is the Difference between an RTP and Other Transportation Planning Documents?



The RTP identifies an investment strategy and a project selection and prioritization process to guide how federal funds are spent on transportation improvements within the region. The RTP provides an overall transportation policy vision for the region, as shown in ***Figure 1-3***.The direction provided in the RTP is a guide for the more detailed future work of specific project development.

Figure 1-3. RTP Provides Overall Regional Transportation Policy Vision

The RTP does not replace individual jurisdictions' general plans, transportation master plans, specific circulation plans, capital improvement plans (CIPs), or modal plans such as bicycle, pedestrian, trail, or transit plans.

The Planning Process

The Sun Corridor MPO RTP represents a collaborative effort to establish a vision for the region's transportation system. The RTP was developed collaboratively based on direction from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) while considering public and stakeholder input.

The RTP planning process provides answers to four key questions, as illustrated in ***Figure 1-4***, which graphically shows the regional transportation planning process.

Figure 1-4. The Regional Transportation Planning Process

1. **Where are we now?** The RTP summarizes existing transportation system conditions.
2. **Where do we want to go?** The RTP establishes transportation system goals and objectives.
3. **What will it take to get us there?** The RTP provides recommendations for each mode of transportation.
4. **How do we allocate our resources?** The RTP presents an investment strategy of how limited resources will be expended for transportation improvements.

Sun Corridor MPO RTP Recommended Investment Strategy (RIS)

The Sun Corridor MPO RTP 2050 Update presents a RIS for the expenditure of federal funds within the Sun Corridor MPO region. The RIS priorities were largely developed based on a technical analysis of recent and programmed projects, but also included public and stakeholder input received through stakeholder outreach as well as Sun Corridor TAC member directives. The RIS does not apply to Highway User Revenue Funds (HURF) or other state sources.

The RIS recognizes the public's and stakeholders' priority to maintain existing infrastructure yet provides sufficient flexibility to modernize and expand the transportation system as needed. The RIS drives the allocation of resources and influences project selection yet is sufficiently flexible to allow Sun Corridor MPO agencies to accommodate and respond to changing needs and emerging priorities.

The funding allocations defined in the RIS as presented in ***Figure 1-5*** underscore the goals of Sun Corridor MPO agencies both to preserve the current system and to expand travel choices for residents and visitors, while also strategically investing to create and retain jobs.

The impact of the RIS on transportation system performance will be limited because of the realities of diminishing long-range revenues. Additionally, funding for pavement preservation is particularly challenging because of the short life cycle of pavement preservation projects (generally six to eight years). However, the RIS allocations across categories show the commitment of Sun Corridor member agencies to:

- Improve mobility and safety through modest expansion as needed to address economic development needs;
- Preserve the region's major roadways (arterials and collectors);
- Support economic development by investing in transportation corridors that improve connectivity to employment; and
- Increase safety and efficiency via system modernization.

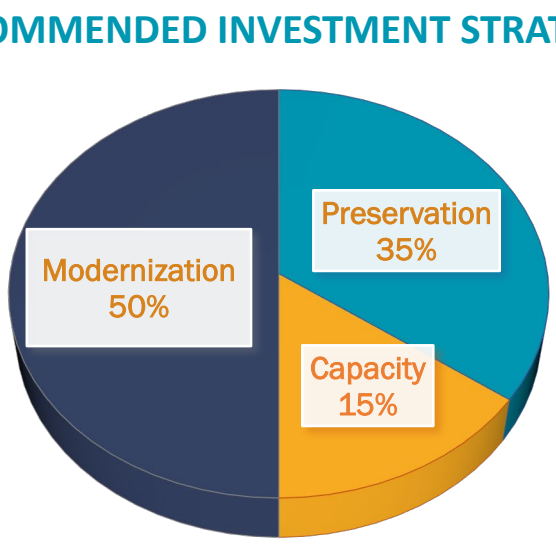


Figure 1-5. Recommended Investment Strategy

2. Community Outreach

Citizen involvement, whether through direct contact or by the input of community representatives, is an important part of successful transportation planning. The Sun Corridor MPO is committed to inclusive and meaningful public involvement, as well as open and honest communication with all individuals and entities. Another aspect of public involvement is forming partnerships between member entities and the public and private sectors to plan and implement transportation/congestion solutions. Community outreach is also critical for identifying community goals and context, which provide insight on desired and appropriate transportation solutions.

The public involvement plan for this effort placed major emphasis on engaging the community early in the process. Early engagement allows potentially critical information provided by stakeholders to influence decisions and ensures widespread and inclusive outreach.

Outreach for this project was accomplished through:

- **RTP TAC**: Representatives of the Sun Corridor MPO met regularly throughout the project to discuss progress and issues, as well as to provide guidance for the plan.
- **Sun Corridor MPO Executive Board Briefings:** Briefings were held at key points in the study.
- **Board of Supervisors/City Council Briefings**: Presentations on the RTP were made to the cities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, Eloy, and Pinal County in November and December of 2023 and January 2024.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** Information was gathered through discussions with City and County staff, Pinal Partnership, Army National Guard, Arizona State Land Department, and Arizona Game and Fish Department related to future economic development in the region. These meetings shed light on issues and needs of the transportation system relative to future growth.
- **Public Survey:** Two online surveys were conducted in 2023 to obtain input on RTP plan goals and transportation needs in the community. Survey findings are summarized below.
- **Public Outreach Events:** In addition to the online survey, staff attended multiple public outreach events to interact with the community and give them a chance to participate in activities for what their top priorities are for the RTP. These events include:
    - 1st Safety night at Casa Grande in April 2023
    - Casa Grande Silent Witness night in September 2023
    - Getting Arizonans Involved in Neighborhoods (GAIN) night at Eloy in October 2023
    - Getting Arizonans Involved in Neighborhoods (GAIN) night at Coolidge in October 2023

Goals and priorities for the region, as expressed through public surveys and outreach events, are summarized below in ***Figure 2-1***.

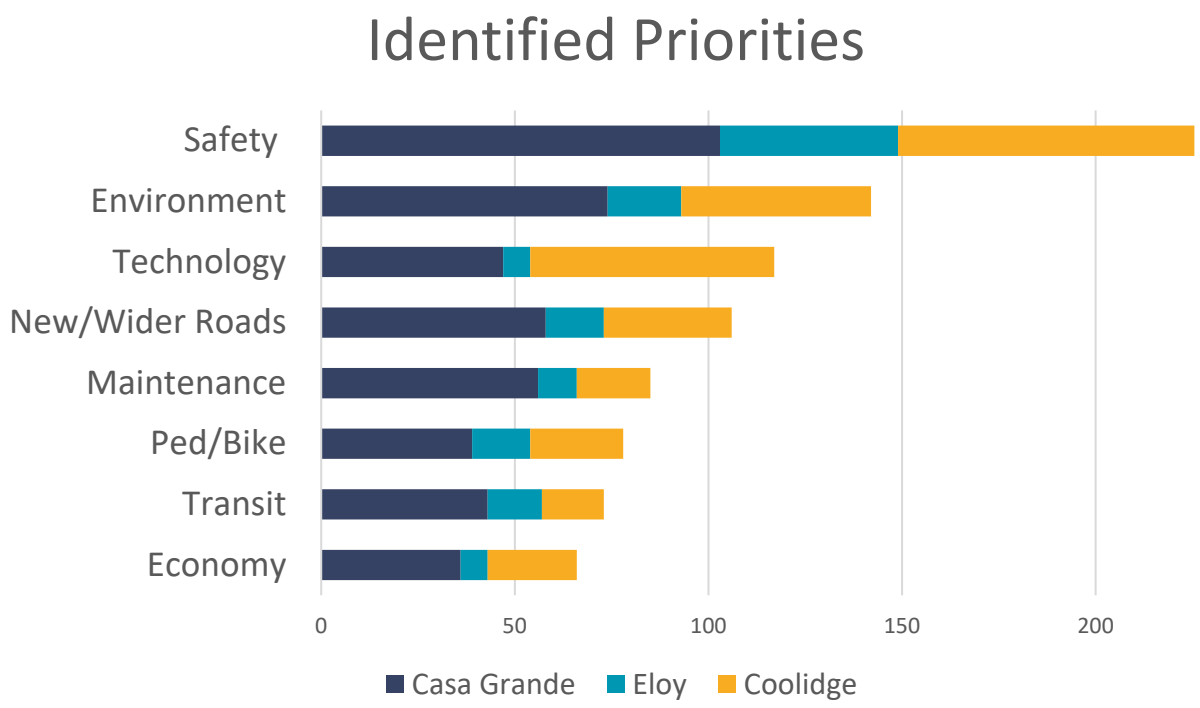


Figure 2-1. Stakeholder Transportation Goal Priorities

3. Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the subsequent Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST Act) and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) outline funding and procedural requirements for multimodal transportation planning in metropolitan areas and states. They require MPOs and states to develop transportation plans and transportation improvement programs through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning.

Goals and Performance Measures

Performance-based planning methods help to translate a long-range vision into a set of goals, objectives, and performance criteria that can be used to guide investment decisions. Performance-based planning involves the following steps:

1. **Develop goals and objectives**: Goals are broad statements that describe what will be achieved. Objectives are specific and measurable statements to achieve the goals. Goals and objectives were developed in collaboration with the RTP TAC and input on priorities obtained at public meetings.
2. **Identify performance measures**: Performance measures are metrics that are used to assess progress towards meeting an objective.

3. **Establish performance targets:** Targets are measures of performance. In this plan, many of the targets involve exceeding the baseline conditions that are experienced today.
4. **Allocate resources:** This step involves determining the specific approaches that will be used to achieve the targets.
5. **Measure and report results:** This step involves measuring progress on a regular basis.

These steps are shown in ***Figure 3-1***.

Figure 3-1. Steps in a Performance-Based Planning Project

The Sun Corridor MPO Executive Board voted in September 2018 to support and adopt in perpetuity the ADOT performance targets established for the following performance targets:

- Infrastructure Conditions
- System Reliability
- Freight Movement & Economic Vitality
- Congestion Reduction & Environmental Sustainability
- Safety
- Transit

The first four of these six targets focus solely on the National Highway system.

In addition, new performance targets related to Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction were recently established by Sun Corridor MPO. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was issued July 2022 for the Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Framework. A Final Rulemaking was established on January 8, 2024. MPOs are required to either support the State target for each performance measure that is applicable to their region or establish their own targets within 180 days of State target establishment. The measure is part of the National Highway Performance Program, and consistent with the TPM framework. State DOT's will establish 2- and 4-year statewide emissions reduction targets with MPO's establishing 4-year targets. State DOT targets are due by February 1, 2024 with subsequent targets due no later than October 1, 2026. In January 2024, ADOT adopted a target reduction of 0.1% in CO2 emissions, and the Sun Corridor MPO adopted these ADOT targets in perpetuity in March 2024.

Therefore, in addition to these ADOT goal areas and targets, the RTP planning process led to the development of additional regional goals in the following areas:

- Safety
- Arterial and collector roadway and bridge conditions
- Vehicle mobility
- Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit services
- Economic vitality
- Environmental protection

4. Economic Development and Transportation

Economic development and transportation are closely intertwined. An efficient transportation system is essential to a market economy. Efficient transportation facilities provide economic benefits such as accessibility to markets and labor resources. An effective transportation network helps customers to easily reach markets, employees to get to work, and industry to ship goods faster. Businesses, ranging from shopping malls to industrial factories, make location and development decisions based on nearby transportation facilities.

Inefficient transportation facilities have an economic cost, such as missed economic opportunities and lower quality of life, that results from congestion or long commutes.

Economic Development Areas of Interest

Over the next 25 years and beyond, the Sun Corridor MPO region is positioned to experience sustained economic development growth. Sun Corridor MPO and its member agencies are committed to promoting projects that improve access to existing employment centers, as well as to new and emerging centers. These expanding or proposed economic development locations are shown in ***Figure 4-1***.

Each of these facilities is expected to add 50 or more employees to their workforce. These additions and expansions, because they are occurring in exporting (“basic”) industries, will tend to produce a higher jobs multiplier effect for the region than most other types of new economic activity. A number of these additions and expansions in Casa Grande and Coolidge are in an area where major concentrations of industrial activity already exist.

The Sun Corridor MPO region will benefit from access to I-10 and I-8. The Sun Corridor MPO TAC is committed to implementing projects that maintain adequate performance on these and other key roadway facilities in order to best support economic growth and development. The Sun Corridor MPO supports additional access to I-10 so that congestion, or limited access does not become a constraint to growth.

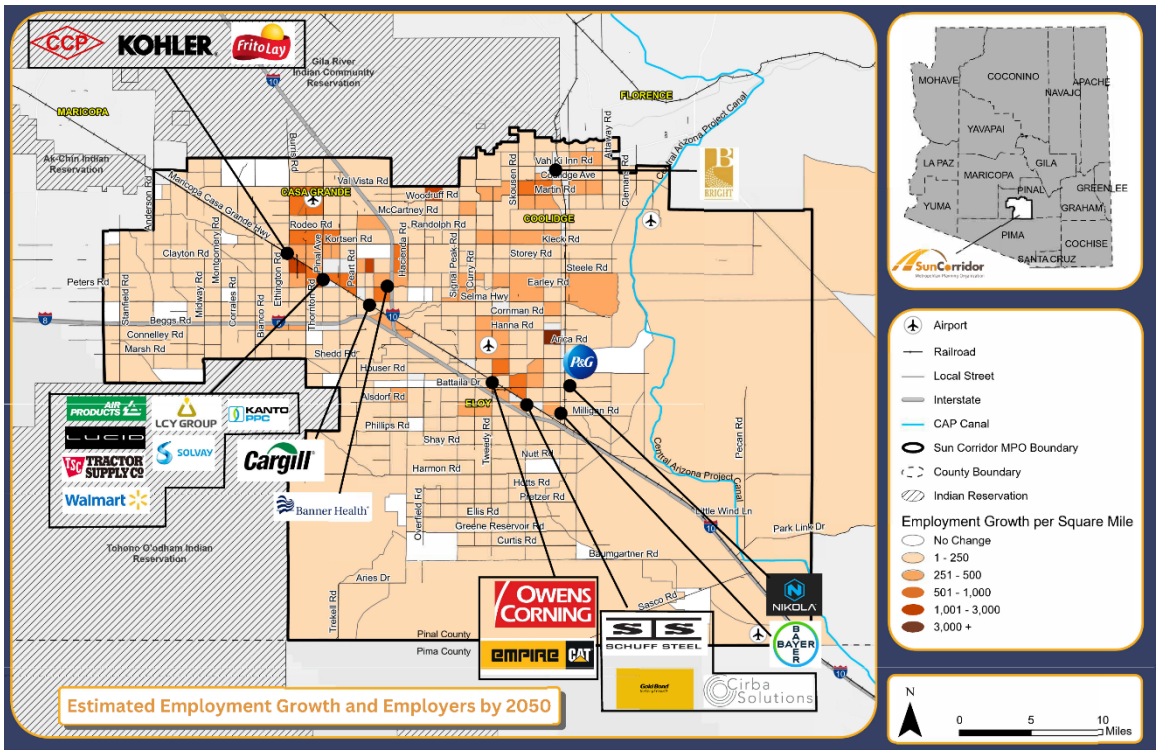


Figure 4-1. Estimated Employment Growth and Employers by 2050

5. Current and Future Population and Employment

Population, employment, demographics, and growth location helps define transportation needs and choices. As the population grows, the need for roadways to facilitate travel and mobility needs will also grow.

Population and Employment

Current Population

The Sun Corridor MPO planning area 2023 population is 148,574 persons according to MAG TDM (see ***Figure 5-1***). The most populated areas are centered primarily in the incorporated cities of the region.

Population by community, according to the 2020 Decennial Census data, is estimated to be:

- **City of Casa Grande** – 53,658 persons
- **City of Coolidge** – 13,218 persons
- **City of Eloy** – 15,635 persons
- **Pinal County (entirety)** – 425,264 persons
- **Pinal County (unincorporated)** – 342,753 persons

Future Population

Population is anticipated to grow from today's 148,574 persons to approximately 437,521 persons in 2050 (see ***Figure 5-1***). This represents an annual average growth rate of 7.20 percent per year over the next 27 years.

Current Employment

As the region's transportation system is developed, and as projects are identified and prioritized for funding, access to major employment centers should be considered. Employment centers' access to safe and reliable transportation systems will enable and encourage these employers to expand and new employers to relocate to the Sun Corridor MPO region, consistent with the Sun Corridor MPO economic vitality goals.

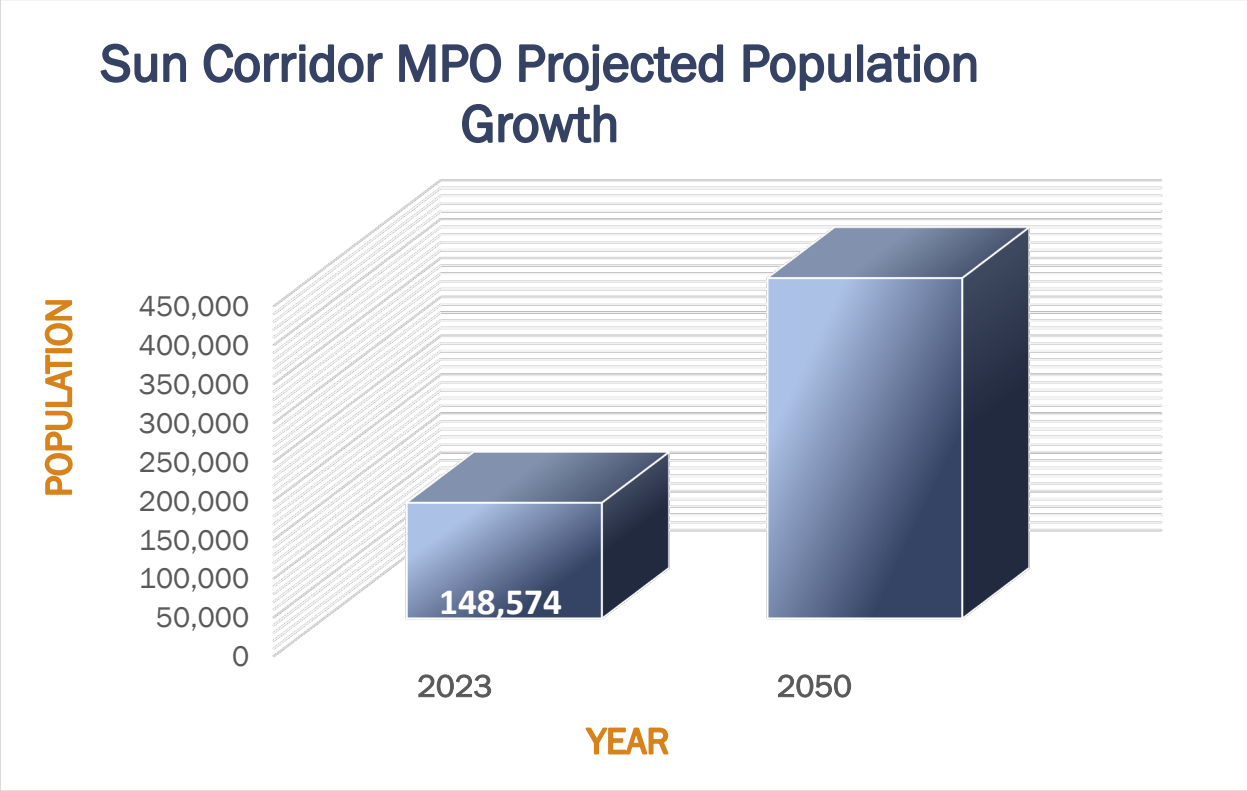


Figure 5-1. Projected Population Growth for the Sun Corridor Region

The region's transportation system is critical to help residents get to and from places of employment. As additional jobs are created in the Sun Corridor MPO region, the need for new and improved roadways will also increase. 2050 projections of employment in the region recognize the current industry mix and the continued maturation and diversification of employment opportunities that will occur over the next 27 years in the Sun Corridor MPO region. The total number of jobs in the region is estimated to grow from approximately 36,582 employees today to 123,249 by 2050. This represents an annual average growth rate of 8.77 percent per year over the next 27 years. A comparison of current and projected employment is shown in ***Figure 5-2***.

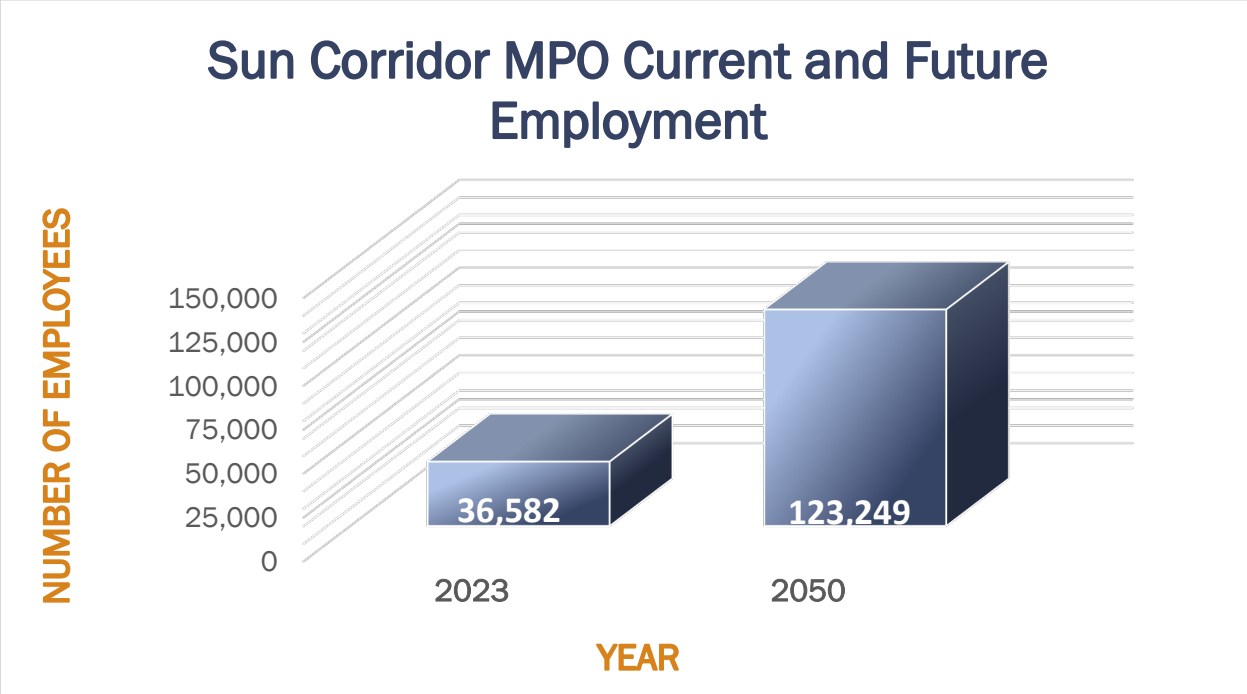


Figure 5-2. Projected Employment Growth for the Sun Corridor Region

6. Transportation Conditions

The next step in developing an RTP is to understand the characteristics of the region's existing transportation system. Understanding the trends and changes that made the region what it is today is essential before developing forecasts of future conditions and transportation needs. Chapter 6 provides an overall snapshot of current transportation characteristics in the Sun Corridor MPO region. The Sun Corridor regional transportation system consists of roadways, transit systems, bicycling and walking pathways, and airports, as described in ***Figure 6-1***.

Figure 6-1. Sun Corridor MPO Region's Transportation Systems

Roadways serve as the foundation of the Sun Corridor MPO regional transportation network, accommodating motor vehicles, freight, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Roads are the main component of the transportation network throughout the MPO, and the primary public space in which MPO residents travel on a daily basis. In all, there are approximately 737 miles of maintained roadways. The efficiency, safety, and condition of the MPO's road and bridge network is essential to the functionality of the other transportation modes, and to the economic prosperity and quality of life of the Sun Corridor MPO region.

Functional Classification

Transportation planners and engineers categorize roadways based on the type of traffic they are intended to serve. For example, arterials move people for long distances at higher speeds within a city or between cities. Collector streets are lower speed and shorter distance than arterials and connect travelers to the arterials. Local streets are very low speed, extend for short distances, and provide direct access to residential and commercial properties. This categorization is referred to as functional classification. Three main functional classes are defined by the FHWA: arterial, collector, and local based on speed, vehicular capacity, and relationships with adjacent existing and future land uses according to the character of service they are intended to provide.

Functional classifications have an inverse relationship between access and mobility. ADOT has been working with jurisdictions to update the federal functional classifications statewide.

Roadway Performance/Level of Service (LOS)

Current traffic congestion levels in the Sun Corridor MPO planning area were analyzed using LOS, a measure that rates the performance of the roadway network in terms of the degree of congestion. This measure uses the letters A through F, with A being the best and F being the worst.

The MAG TDM was used to project future travel patterns in the Sun Corridor MPO region. The TDM was updated to reflect economic development that is expected to occur in the region, based on discussions with planning and economic development staff in Casa Grande, Coolidge, Eloy, and Pinal County.

In 2050, the TDM indicates areas of congestion at the I-10/Red Rock Road interchange and in the Battaglia Road/Toltec Highway intersection area.

Table 6.1 summarizes road conditions exhibiting congested conditions with the 2050 projected travel demands.

Table 6.1. Future Travel Demand Volumes on Selected Road Segments

Road	Jurisdiction	From	To	2050 LOS
Sunshine Boulevard	Eloy	Phillips Road	I-10	F
Sunshine Boulevard	Eloy	Salazar Road	Phillips Road	F
Sunshine Boulevard	Eloy	Shay Road	Salazar Road	E
Bartlett Road	Coolidge	Attaway Road	Proposed north/south Parkway	F
Bartlett Road	Coolidge	Clemans Road	Coolidge Airport Road	F
Toltec Road	Eloy	I-10 Eastbound Ramps	Houser Road	F
Toltec Road	Eloy	Houser Road	Battaglia Road	F
Tumbleweed Road	Eloy	Shedd Road	Eloy Municipal Airport	F
SR 287	Casa Grande	I-10 Eastbound Ramps	I-10 Westbound Ramps	F
Sunland Gin Rd	Eloy	Battaglia	Houser Road	E

Transportation Safety

The Sun Corridor MPO completed its first Strategic Transportation Safety Plan (STSP) in 2016. The STSP vision is to **"reduce fatal and serious injury crashes through implementation of effective safety strategies and countermeasures,"** and the STSP goal is to **"reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries in the Sun Corridor MPO region by 3 to 7 percent during the next 5 years."** The vision and goal were developed with stakeholder input and were inspired by the FHWA vision "towards Zero Deaths" and Arizona's vision "toward Zero Deaths by Reducing Crashes for a Safer Arizona."

Findings and recommendations in the STSP were based on data provided by ADOT for all reported crashes within the Sun Corridor MPO region for the 5-year period from January 2017 through December 2021. During that 5-year period, the region experienced:

- 89 fatal crashes
- 274 suspected serious injuries crashes
- 7,200 crashes

Collisions that resulted in no injury were the most prevalent, accounting for 66.3 percent of the total collisions. Fatalities accounted for 1.2 percent of study area crashes, and suspected serious injuries and suspected minor injuries crashes accounted for approximately 16 percent of the total study area crashes. Single vehicle crashes have been the most predominant crash type in the region for both total crashes and severe (fatal and suspected serious injury) crashes.

A key component of the STSP was developing safety projects. The following Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) project applications were submitted to, and selected by, ADOT to receive HSIP funding for fiscal years 2023 through 2026, as shown in ***Table 6.2***

Table 6.2. HSIP Funding				
Fiscal Year	**Location**	**Amount**	**Phase**	**Project Description**
2023	Casa Grande	$112,169	Construction	Systemic Lane Departure - Overfield Road; Florence Blvd to Kleck Road (2 miles)
2023	Coolidge	$199,411	Construction	Systemic Lane Departure - - Signal Peak Road; SR87 to Woodruff Road (3.6 miles)
2023	SCMPO Region	$297,516	Planning	Pinal County Strategic Transportation Safety Plan
2023	Coolidge	$239,703	Design	SR87/Kleck Left Turn Lanes
2024	Coolidge	$1,500,000	Construction	SR87/Skousen (Traffic Signal)
2024	Casa Grande	$175,925	Design	Florence Blvd & Colorado St. - 300' of Raised median
2024	Casa Grande	$175,925	Design	Florence Blvd & Peart Rd - Remove medians to remove negative offsets
2024	Eloy	$147,550	Design	Battaglia Dr & Tweedy Rd - Intersection Lighting
2024	Pinal County	$522,100	Design	Battaglia Drive; Henness Road to Overfield Road, Shoulder Widening- Approx. 3 miles of 5' north side & 2' south side installation of shoulders
2024	Pinal County	$408,600	Design	Sunland Gin Rd - Installation of approx. 1 mile of 5' shoulders & rumble strips
2024	Casa Grande	$175,925	Design	SR387 - Viola St and Pinal Ave (Casa Grande HAWK)
2024	Coolidge	$462,214	Construction	SR87/Kleck Left Turn Lanes
2025	Casa Grande	$412,115	Construction	Florence Blvd & Colorado St. - 300' of Raised median
2025	Pinal County	$1,031,910	Construction	Sunland Gin Rd - Installation of approx. 1 mile of 5' shoulders & rumble strips
2025	Casa Grande	$392,645	Construction	SR387 - Viola St and Pinal Ave (Casa Grande HAWK)
2026	Casa Grande	$328,158	Construction	Florence Blvd & Peart Rd - Remove medians to remove negative offsets
2026	Eloy	$129,847	Construction	Battaglia Dr & Tweedy Rd - Intersection Lighting
2026	Pinal County	$2,874,775	Construction	Battaglia Drive; Henness Road to Overfield Road, Shoulder Widening- Approx. 3 miles of 5' north side & 2' south side installation of shoulders

System Preservation

Roadway Pavement Conditions

Whether trips are taken by automobiles, transit, bicycle, or walking, everyone benefits when the streets are maintained in a safe and serviceable condition. Maintaining infrastructure condition is a key focus area nationally, particularly on NHS roads.

Pavement conditions on functionally classified arterial and collector roadways in the Sun Corridor MPO region were evaluated by each jurisdiction using a uniform rating system based on Asphalt Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) System Guidelines, which rate pavement surface conditions on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being excellent and 1 indicating pavement failure.

Example of a roadway with very poor pavement condition

Example of a roadway with good pavement condition

A review of pavement condition shows that the Cities of Casa Grande and Coolidge do an excellent job of maintaining their arterial and collector roadways, with more than 80 and 73 percents, respectively, of roadways in good, very good, or excellent condition. Within unincorporated Pinal County, 37 percent of arterial and collector roadways are in good, very good, or excellent condition. Within Eloy, 39 percent of arterial and collector roadways are in good, very good, or excellent condition.

In the Sun Corridor MPO Region, 50.4 percent of road miles are in excellent, great, or good condition. 21.4 percent of roads are in fair condition, 19.0 percent are in poor condition, and 9.4 percent have unknown conditions.

Bridge Conditions

ADOT maintains inventories for all bridges and grade-separated structures on state highways, and Sun Corridor MPO member jurisdictions have agreements with ADOT to maintain bridge inventories for bridges on local and county roads.

Table 6.3 summarizes the most recently available state and local government bridge inventories for the Sun Corridor MPO region. Approximately 98 percent of all bridges are in good or fair condition.

Table 6.3. Bridge Condition

Agency or Jurisdiction	Number of Bridges	Good Condition	Fair Condition	Poor Condition
Casa Grande	4	3	1	0
Coolidge	13	10	2	1
Eloy	12	8	4	0
Pinal County (unincorporated)	33	24	9	0
Subtotal	62	45	16	1
ADOT	160	96	64	0

Transit

The Sun Corridor MPO is responsible for coordinating regional transit funding and investment. The MPO TAC collaboratively ensures that transit investments serve to support regional transportation priorities and goals. The Sun Corridor RTP has established a goal to increase the number of residents and visitors served by transit in the region.

Three public transit systems, the Central Arizona Regional Transit (CART), City of Coolidge Cotton Express, and City of Casa Grande LINK currently operate in the Sun Corridor MPO region. The CART and Cotton Express services, described in more detail below, had a ridership of 24,943 passenger trips in 2022, according to data from the CAG and Sun Corridor MPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan FY 2023. The Casa Grande LINK service started in late 2023, so ridership data is not currently available.

The Gila-Pinal Rides Committee is the steering committee for transit coordination issues within the CAG and Sun Corridor MPO regions. The Gila Pinal Rides Committee identified the following program goals:

> ***Goal 1.*** Develop joint or shared services to address local and regional service gaps through new technologies, ride sharing, and/or data collection management efforts.
>
> ***Goal 2.*** Identify and/or develop new alternative funding methods to increase operations.
>
> ***Goal 3.*** Create and maintain an active digital footprint to promote public transit information and marketing campaigns.

Transit Planning Initiatives

Coolidge Transit Plan

The Coolidge Transit Plan was completed in June 2016 and will be updated in 2024-2025, with the goal to conduct an objective and comprehensive assessment of existing transit services and present recommendations for current and future demand. Based on the preceding analysis, goals were developed as well as a phased five-year plan of improvements, which are summarized as follows:

Cotton Express

Phase 1

- Formalize route-deviation policy.
- Provide bi-directional service along Arizona Boulevard.

Phase 2

- Introduce limited-hour Saturday service.

CART

Phase 1

- Provide a local circulator in Florence.
- Increase service frequency along the trunk line (service from Florence to Coolidge, and Coolidge to Central Arizona College).
- Extend service to Florence Gardens, Florence Anthem Hospital, and Eleven Mile Corner Road.

Phase 2

- Extend service to San Tan Valley, Sacaton, Blackwater, Arizona City, and Eloy.

Eloy Transit Feasibility Study

The City of Eloy Transit Feasibility Study, completed and accepted in 2019, identified near-, mid-, and long-term transit service recommendations. The near-term transit recommendation is a flex route circulator service within Eloy with a regional connection to Casa Grande. This provides access to Downtown Eloy and other key locations throughout the community identified by the public and stakeholders.

Pinal County Transit Governance Study

The Pinal County Transit Governance Study completed in 2021 with the goal to create a framework to better manage and govern future public transportation services. The Governance Study provides a comprehensive guide to enhance transit services and investment recommendations for best uses of federal, state, local and regional funding. The supported recommendation was the Hybrid Governance Model, options of which are explained below.

Three potential, non-exclusive options for how the hybrid governance structure could be applied in Pinal County:

1. The Pinal Regional Transportation Authority (PRTA) plays a leadership role in managing regional transit resources and investments.

2. Coolidge Area Regional Transit (CART) becomes a regional transit operator and initiates partnerships with adjacent cities and towns.
3. A new agency forms to operate regional transit services. This new agency could build by expanding or repositioning one or more of the existing transit operators.

Central Arizona Regional Transit Route Optimization Study

The Central Arizona Regional Transit Route Optimization Study, completed in 2022, evaluated the current services being provided, ridership, and where transit is needed most. Through the process of this study, constraints of CART's staff, vehicle inventory and funding were identified. As part of this study, near-term, and long-term recommendations were suggested. The implementation plan detailed specific service recommendations for both the near-term and long-term recommendations.

Near-Term Recommendations

- Route times – Remove low ridership routes
- Elimination of connection Greyhound Service
- Addition of Walmart stop in Coolidge
- Casa Grande service alteration

Long-Term Recommendations

- Elimination of service to Casa Grande
- Additional expansion opportunities in Eloy, Arizona City, Florence Gardens, and Anthem at Merrill Ranch

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

Bicycling and walking represent important modes of transportation. The Sun Corridor RTP encourages investments in bicycling and walking facilities. These investments encourage healthy lifestyles and physical fitness, as well as provide safe and comfortable transportation options to access jobs, schools, residences, recreation, and shopping. When walking and bicycling facilities are provided, particularly in downtown areas, they can mean fewer vehicles on the road.

A goal of the Sun Corridor RTP is to increase the number of miles of new bicycle infrastructure in the region. This can be implemented in conjunction with pavement preservation and rehabilitation projects or new roadway construction or reconstruction by agencies or private development.

Aviation

Aviation represents another critical transportation mode in the Sun Corridor region. While airport investments (taxiways, runways, terminals, etc.) are guided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Sun Corridor MPO is responsible for ensuring that investments in airport and aviation facilities become part of the region's intermodal transportation system by improving connectivity and access to them by other transportation modes including by vehicle and freight, walking, bicycling, or transit. Multimodal access to aviation facilities can promote economic development and tourism. The four municipal airports in the Sun Corridor region include:

- Casa Grande Municipal Airport
- Coolidge Municipal Airport
- Eloy Municipal Airport
- Pinal Airpark

Figure 6 12. Casa Grande Municipal Airport (Source: City of Casa Grande)

Freight

Efficient, reliable, and strategically designed transportation infrastructure benefits businesses by lowering transportation and shipping costs and providing quicker access to markets and services. This leads to their improved economic competitiveness and growth, and that of the region.

Freight transportation represents a tremendous opportunity in the Sun Corridor MPO region. With access to two major interstates (I-8 and I-10), as well as the Union Pacific Railroad, the region is well-positioned to continue to attract freight-associated industries and customers. This will require a unified approach by Sun Corridor MPO agencies and collaboration with freight providers and industrial customers to protect, maximize, and expand freight-oriented commerce and economic activity.

The Sun Corridor MPO presents multiple objectives designed to improve freight accommodation within the region. These include keeping the region's roadways in good condition, improving safety, reducing travel times by improving connectivity, and investing in transportation improvements that provide for more jobs in the region.

Arizona State Freight Plan (developed in 2017 and updated in 2022)

The Arizona State Freight Plan established a five-year freight plan in line with federal requirements for state freight plans embodied in the FAST Act. A core focus of the plan is to address the importance of freight in the planning and programming activities of ADOT.

In the original 2017 plan, priority freight improvement projects were identified. In the Sun Corridor MPO region, these projects were:

- **I-10, Picacho Area Road Widening**
- **I-10, Earley Road to I-8 Widening and Traffic Interchange Improvements**

Future Freight Route Needs

Transportation plans need to consider alternative truck-traffic routing that will enhance connectivity between industrial investment areas and I-10 and protect the region's ability to have efficient and effective road designs promoting commercial and residential development in a livable community.

For example, a loop road on the west side of Casa Grande would create a freight-friendly transportation corridor. Such a roadway would provide convenient, low-congestion access for trucks and separate industrial traffic from commercial and commuter traffic. Another freight planning consideration is designated truck routes to reach the proposed inland port in the Coolidge-Eloy area on SR 87.

Transportation Security

Transportation security addresses the protection of transportation infrastructure related to hazardous events. When considering the amount of hazardous materials, chemicals, and flammable products that are transported on the nation's infrastructure each day, it is easy to recognize the need for security measures along highways and bridges.

Security Planning in the Sun Corridor MPO Region

Public agencies in the Sun Corridor MPO region have developed plans to mitigate adverse impacts from hazardous natural or man-made events. The Pinal County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for maintaining the County's Emergency Response Plan, the Long-Term Recovery Plan, The Multi-Hazard Multi-Jurisdiction Mitigation Plan, and the Local Emergency Planning Committee Hazardous Materials Response Plan.

Pinal County has a Pinal Emergency Notification System (PENS) to provide citizens with critical information in a variety of situations, such as: major roadwork, road closures, severe weather, fires, hazardous materials incidents, evacuations, and other emergency events. For more information on Pinal County's Emergency Management or to sign up for notifications, go to: http://www.pinalcountyaz.gov/emergencymanagement/pages/home.aspx

The Pinal County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022) provides mitigation strategies for each of the Sun Corridor MPO jurisdictions. Related to transportation, these strategies include:

- **Casa Grande**: Identification of travel corridors identifying bridge and other drainage needs; Regional Trail Masterplan needs to be improved and modified to accommodate future planned area developments that were not part of the current study.
- **Coolidge**: Mitigation measures are primarily related to floodplain management and wildlife protection.
- **Eloy**: Mitigation measures are primarily related to wildfire protection and emergency operations.
- **Pinal County**: Discusses that the Capital Improvement Plan, which currently allows for spending across multiple fiscal years on facilities, flood control, and transportation projects related to hazard mitigation, should add requirements for projects to incorporate hazard mitigation into the project plan.

Environmental Mitigation Activities

The RTP supports a number of environmental mitigation activities in the region. One is the adoption of ADOT environmental sustainability goals, objectives, and performance measures. This goal of environmental sustainability is intended to enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment. In the 2016 RTP, the Sun Corridor MPO adopted environmental goals and objectives relating to decreasing the number of unpaved roads in the region.

This RTP supports efforts by member jurisdictions to encourage employers and developers to consider travel demand management strategies and approaches. These strategies, including ridesharing, could potentially decrease traffic during peak hours.The Sun Corridor MPO provides program and project support for public transit and human service transportation programs, which supports protection and enhancement of the environment.

7. Best Practices

Considerations in developing high-quality transportation improvements for the Sun Corridor MPO region are discussed in this section. Best practices are presented for:

- Regional Access Management
- Complete Streets
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
- Travel Demand Management
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Pavement Management
- Regional Transit Governance
- Designated Truck Routes

Best practices are methods, techniques, or programs that have been found to be successful in accomplishing goals, and generally produces results that are superior to those achieved by other means, or because it has become a standard way of doing things. Some best practices can range from detailed practices to more open guidelines, depending on the specific topic.

Using recognized best practices have several advantages including:

- Best practices have been shown to work in similar situations.
- Employing a method and/or guidelines that have been used before successfully can save time and provide a resource for questions, and implementation experiences.
- Best practices can help justify an approach because it has demonstrated effectiveness.

See in ***Table 8.7***. for a summary of best practice recommendations for each category.

8. Implementation

This chapter summarizes the recommended transportation system investment approach proposed for the Sun Corridor MPO planning area within the RTP horizon year (2050).

Separate implementation plans are presented for three transportation elements: **roadway**, **transit**, and **aviation**.

Revenues at the federal and state level for these elements are associated with distinct funding sources, and funding requirements are not transferable except in special cases.

The roadway system implementation plan encompasses all RTP elements not specifically covered by the transit and aviation implementation plans. The roadway system implementation plan is the focus of the 2050 RTP, as the roadway element is the most comprehensive of the three elements and Sun Corridor MPO member jurisdictions have control over the allocation of the revenues associated with the roadway element.

Roadway System Implementation Plan

A roadway transportation system investment approach was selected in collaboration with the Sun Corridor MPO TAC and is fiscally constrained—that is, the level of investment serves as a "budget" for federal transportation funding that is projected to be available to the Sun Corridor MPO region over the next 20 years.

Funding Sources

The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program and the HSIP represent the primary federal funding sources for transportation system improvements in the Sun Corridor MPO region.

The STBG program is allocated to states and MPOs for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on federal-aid roadways, bridge, and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects. STBG funds are obligated in proportion to their relative share of the state's population. STBG funds vary by year, but the Sun Corridor MPO anticipates receiving approximately $581,661.08 Obligation Authority and $2,908,305.40 for the 5-year time period.

The HSIP funds highway safety improvements with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The HSIP emphasizes a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety that focuses on results. Currently these funds are allocated through a statewide competitive process. The Sun Corridor MPO region has been highly successful in applying for HSIP funding; however, to be conservative, only currently awarded funds are assumed to be available in the future.

The Sun Corridor MPO jurisdictions will continue to pursue HSIP projects consistent with the Sun Corridor MPO STSP and Pinal County STSP. The HSIP revenues shown include an awarded HSIP project for Fiscal years 2024/2025 to address angle crashes at thirteen intersections in Pinal County by replacing stop signs with solar-powered LED stop signs.

STBG and HSIP funds that are projected to be available in the Sun Corridor MPO region are identified in ***Table 8.1***. Note that Table 8.1 does not include other local or state revenue that is anticipated to be available to local agencies for transportation investments.

Table 8.1. STBG and HSIP Revenues, 2021-2050		
Time Period	**STBG Program Funds**	**Highway Safety Improvement Funds**
2021-2025	$3,545,274	$7,223,986
2026-2030	$2,954,395	0
2031-2035	$2,954,395	0
2036-2040	$2,954,395	0
2041-2045	$2,908,305	0
2046-2050		0
Totals	**$12,408,459**	**$7,223,986**
Source: Sun Corridor MPO		

Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) Exchange

The Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) Exchange was created by the Arizona Legislature in 1997 and is run at ADOT's discretion to benefit rural cities, town, and counties. The program allows planning organizations and their local agencies to swap out federal funds for state highway funds to design and construct projects. The HURF includes fees and charges relating to the registration and operation of motor vehicles and a motor fuel tax and is the largest of the three transportation funding sources for ADOT. In FY2023, the HURF generated $1.75 billion, which is a 40 percent increase from FY2014 ($1.2 billion), largely through strong economic growth in the state.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The IIJA was signed into law on November 15, 2021, replacing the previous FAST Act. This Bipartisan Infrastructure Law expands on existing funding programs to improve transportation systems and services over a five-year period. ***Table 8.2*** shows the formula funding for Federal-Aid programs.

Table 8.2. IIJA Formula Funding	
Federal-Aid Formula Program	**IIJA 5-Year Funding (Nationally)**
National Highway Performance Program	$148B
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program	$72B
Highway Safety Improvement Program	$15.6B
(New) Carbon Reduction Program	$6.4B
(New) PROTECT Program	$7.3B
Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ)	$13.2B
National Freight Program	$7.2B
STBG Set-Aside (Transportation Alternatives)	$7.2B
Metropolitan Planning (Highway)	$2.3B
Metropolitan Planning (Transit)	$0.8B

These formula funds are distributed at the state level. Some programs continue to provide formula funding, while others allocate funding through competitive grant applications.

Competitive Grant Programs

The Sun Corridor MPO has provided support for numerous successful grant applications that bring additional funding to the region. The IIJA also includes funding for over 100 competitive grant funding programs (for more information visit https://billaunchpad.com/nofo). ***Table 8.3*** below describes the grant programs that member agencies have applied to in the past.

Table 8.3. SCMPO Grants Awarded

Grant Program	Description
ADOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TA Program)	The TA Set-Aside from the STBG Program provides federal funding for a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects and activities such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management; environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity; recreational trails; safe routes to school projects; and vulnerable road user safety assessments.
ADOT Off System Bridge (OSB) Program	The Purpose of the Off-System Bridge Program is to fund the Design and/or Construction for replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and protection of roadway bridges over waterways, other topographical barriers, other roadways, railroads, canals, ferry landings, etc. on bridges that are not on the Federal-aid highway system (local roads or rural minor collectors).
Rebuilding America Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant	RAISE discretionary grants help project sponsors at the state and local levels, including municipalities, Tribal governments, counties, and others complete critical freight and passenger transportation infrastructure projects. The eligibility requirements of RAISE allow project sponsors to obtain funding for projects that may be harder to support through other U.S. DOT grant programs.
Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant	The RCE grant program provides funding for highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods.
Economic Strength Projects (ESP) Grant	The purpose of this program is to enhance economic strength and competitiveness of Arizona rural communities by providing funding for highway projects that foster job growth.

Roadway Recommended Investment Strategy (RIS)

A primary purpose of the RTP is to identify how federal funds will be expended over the next 20 years. Roadway improvements are categorized into three general categories of investments; preservation, modernization, and expansion, as defined in ***Table 8.4***. These categories are consistent with the ADOT Long Range Transportation Plan.

Table 8.4. Investment Strategy Categories

Category	Description
Preservation	Activities that protect transportation infrastructure by sustaining asset condition or extending asset service life; preservation includes regular maintenance and resurfacing of pavements
Modernization	Roadway improvements that upgrade efficiency, functionality, and safety without adding capacity; examples of modernization activities include widening of narrow lanes, access control, bridge replacement, hazard elimination, lane reconstruction and sidewalks
Expansion	Improvements that add transportation capacity through the addition of new facilities and or services; expansion activities include adding new roadway lanes and construction of new roadway facilities

The Sun Corridor MPO RTP 2050 Update uses an RIS for expenditure of federal funds within the Sun Corridor MPO region. The RIS priorities were largely developed based on a technical analysis of recent and programmed projects, but also included public and stakeholder input received through stakeholder outreach as well as Sun Corridor TAC member directives. The RIS does not apply to HURF or other state sources. The RTP TAC recommended that federal funding be distributed approximately, consistent with the percentages shown below in ***Figure 8-1***.

Figure 8-1. Recommended Investment Strategy

Projects of Opportunity

Transportation needs in the Sun Corridor MPO region exceed federal STBG program funds that are anticipated to be available over the next 20 years (2050). The Sun Corridor MPO will continue to explore and pursue any available opportunity to fund needed transportation improvements. Should additional federal funding for local projects become available, the jurisdictions in the region have identified several high-priority projects opportunities.

Strategic Projects

A number of transportation planning initiatives will have a major impact on transportation within the Sun Corridor MPO region as well as adjacent planning areas and jurisdictions. These include:

- East-West Corridor
- North-South Corridor
- I-11 Project
- I-10 Widening from SR 202 to SR 387
- Phoenix-Tucson Passenger Rail Study
- Central Arizona Parkway
- Procter & Gamble Roadway Improvements
- Houser Road Improvement Project
- Freight Corridor Roadway Improvements Project
- I-10 and Kortsen Road Interchange
- Sunland Gin Roadway Improvements Project

The Sun Corridor MPO supports these studies and will continue to collaborate with ADOT and other regional planning partners to implement these projects.

Transit Implementation Plan

As noted in Chapter 7, there may be new transit systems established in the future as well as potentially new transit governance in the region. However, until this occurs, the transit implementation plan assumes current funding levels and transit system operations.

Transit Revenue Forecasts

Key sources of transit funding for the region are provided through FTA Formula Grant Programs:

Section 5311 – Rural Areas: This program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000. Currently, the Cotton Express and CART use this funding program. In fiscal year 2022, the Cotton Express and CART transit systems had $1,122,000 in total funding for operating, administration, and capital expenses through the federal 5311 monies and local match funds. In fiscal year 2023, the level of funding is $996,000. These funding levels are summarized in ***Table 8.5***. Assuming an average funding of $1,059,000 per year (average of FY 2023 and 2024 funding), total grant funding for the 20-year period is $21,180,000.

Section 5310 – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities: This program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations. Since this is a discretionary program and is based on a competitive process, estimates for this source are not provided. Transit providers that are in the process of applying for Section 5310 transit funds are shown in ***Table 8.6.***

Section 5307 – Urbanized Area Formula Funding: This program provides transit capital and operating assistance and for transportation related planning in urbanized areas over 50,000 population. This funding is available to the City of Casa Grande as they continue to implement transit services. Just over $1 million in funding is available.

Programmed Projects

Transit projects that have been awarded 5311 grant funding are summarized in ***Table 8.5***.

Table 8.5. Section 5311 Funding Grants, FY 2023-2024

FY	Sponsor Name	Description	Federal Funds	Local Match	Total
2023	Cotton Express/CART	Operating, Administration, and Capital Expenses	$717,860	$404,140	$1,122,000
2024	Cotton Express/CART	Operation, Administration, and Capital Expenses	$643,900	$352,100	$996,000

Table 8.6. Section 5310 Transit Funding Applications, FY 2023-2024

Site	Sponsor Name	Project Description	Federal Funds	Local Match	Total
Casa Grande	The Opportunity Tree	Replacement Van	$62,645	$11,055	$73,700

Aviation Implementation Plan

Aviation Revenues

In conjunction with Arizona's public airports and the FAA, ADOT develops the Five-Year Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP) to parallel the FAA's ACIP. The ACIP includes projects that are recommended in the airport master plans for each airport. The ACIP has the dual objective of maximizing the use of state dollars for airport development and maximizing FAA funding for Arizona airports.

The ADOT 2024-2028 Five-Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program contains project listings for improvements that have been submitted to FAA for grant award. Currently only one project is in this category for Sun Corridor MPO region airports. The project is to acquire 70 acres of land for development at Pinal Airpark. The state and local shares for the

project are each $13,410, and the federal share is $273,180 for a project total of $300,000. Capital improvement projects for each airport in the region are reported from airport master plans or capital improvement plans.

Coolidge Municipal Airport

Planned improvements are based on information on the Coolidge Municipal Airport website. The following short-term projects are planned at the airport for fiscal years 2023 through 2028 with an estimated total cost of $23 million.

Coolidge received a $9.5 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the development of a new runway along with the installation of new lighting and lighting controls. The City of Coolidge received another $450,000 for runway and runway lighting reconstruction and installing a navigation aid.

Casa Grande Municipal Airport

Planned improvements for the Casa Grande Municipal Airport are based on information in the Airport Layout Plan Update and Narrative Report (2015). The recommendations span a 20-year period with an estimated total cost of $11.1 million.

Eloy Municipal Airport

Planned improvements for the Eloy Municipal Airport are based on the Airport Master Plan (2011). In 2019, Eloy Municipal Airport received a $150,000 FAA grant for taxiway reconstruction. The recommendations span a 20-year period with an estimated total cost of $8.9 million.

Pinal Airpark

Planned improvements for the Pinal Airpark are based on the Airport Master Plan (2015) and recent interviews with airpark staff. There is a current Pinal Airport Construction Project underway in Phase 2 of 3, which includes new runway edge lights, new threshold lights, new Runway End Identifier Lights (REILs), new drainage and grading, and refurbished lighting vault. The total project budget is $10 million. Recommendations from the Pinal Airpark Capital Improvement Program span a 20-year period with an estimated total cost of $103.8 million.

Regional Aviation System Plan (RASP)

Currently, the Sun Corridor MPO region does not have a formal RASP. A RASP is developed to provide an independent analysis of future aviation trends in a region. Identified airport facility and system requirements are used together with the airport planning process to establish a proposed set of improvements for enhancing the regional airport system. Preparation of a RASP includes derivation of forecasts of future operations at each airport. The RASP is primarily an advisory and informational document. Development of the RASP is coordinated with the State Aviation System Plan (SASP).

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations are provided for several topics in this RTP. These are summarized in ***Table 8.7***.

Table 8.7. Summary of Recommendations	
Topic	**Recommendation**
RIS for expenditure of federal funds	• 35% preservation • 50% modernization • 15% expansion
Access management	Each Sun Corridor MPO member agency adopt a consistent regional access management policy to guide roadway improvements within their respective jurisdictions. The existing Pinal County Access Management Guidelines may serve as a starting point.
Complete Streets	Each Sun Corridor MPO member jurisdiction develops and adopts a complete streets policy.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	All new roadway projects include adequate right-of-way dedication to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
Travel Demand Management	Sun Corridor MPO member jurisdictions should encourage employers and developers to consider travel demand management strategies and approaches. The corridor between Coolidge and Eloy would be a good location to implement travel demand management practices because of planned industrial development.
Signal Coordination	Sun Corridor region invest in communications infrastructure (wireless or fiber optic cable) to better enable traffic signal coordination along major corridors.
Autonomous Vehicles	Sun Corridor MPO member jurisdictions take steps to modernize traffic control infrastructure once the new MUTCD is published as quickly as feasible to accommodate the rapidly changing technology of vehicles.
Electric Vehicles	The Sun Corridor MPO create a plan to determine the projected EV adoption in the region and the amount of public and private EV infrastructure to meet adoption levels.
Pavement Management	It is recommended that the Sun Corridor MPO region consider acquisition of an ARAN van that can become a shared and valuable resource for the Sun Corridor MPO member agencies. Acquisition of an ARAN or contracting for this type of service would provide consistent collection of pavement conditions throughout the entire Sun Corridor MPO region.
Designated Truck Routes	It is recommended that the Sun Corridor MPO jurisdictions collaboratively develop a SCMPO Regional Truck Route and Freight Network Plan.

9. Air Quality

The Sun Corridor MPO has the responsibility to ensure that the transportation projects, plans, and programs within the Sun Corridor region conform to state air quality plans for the federal air quality standards. Specifically, the Sun Corridor MPO's Five-Year TIP and this RTP must be consistent with and conform to the purpose of air quality plans for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Conformance with Air Quality Standards

NAAQS have been established through the Clean Air Act for six principal pollutants, which are called "criteria" pollutants. Two areas within the Sun Corridor MPO region have been designated as nonattainment areas:

- **West Pinal PM-10 Serious Nonattainment Area** – This area is in serious nonattainment status for particulate matter (dust) smaller than ten micrometers (PM-10).
- **West Central Pinal PM-2.5 Nonattainment Area** – This area is in nonattainment status for particulate matter (dust) less than 2.5 micrometers in diameters. It should be noted that since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or ADEQ have not determined whether nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions are an insignificant contributor to the PM-2.5 attainment problem, NOx analysis must be included in the build/no-build analysis for the Pinal PM-2.5 Nonattainment Area.

Dust particles of these sizes can be drawn into the lungs and cause respiratory or other health problems.

The nonattainment areas are shown ***Figure 9-1***. Both the Sun Corridor MPO planning area boundary and the MAG planning area boundaries include portions of these nonattainment areas.

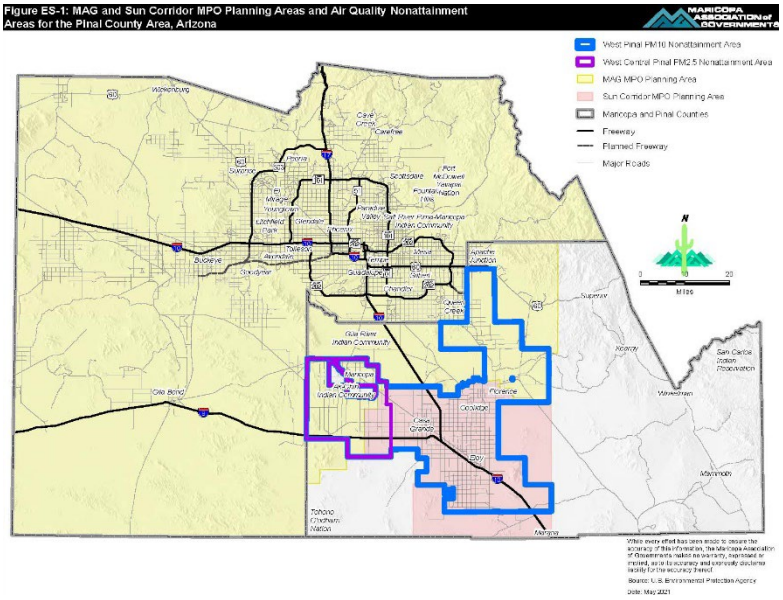


Figure 9-1. Sun Corridor MPO and MAG Planning Areas and Air Quality Nonattainment Areas

During preparation of the previous RTP, West Pinal County was designated a "Moderate" PM-10 Nonattainment Area. In June 2020, EPA determined that the area failed to attain the PM-10 standard by the December 31, 2018 attainment date, and the area was reclassified as "Serious" in July 2020, with an attainment date of December 31, 2022. In July 2023, EPA determined that the area still failed to attain the PM-10 standards by the new deadline, resulting in requirements to prepare a new Five Percent Particulate Plan for PM-10 for the West Pinal County Nonattainment Area by December 31, 2023. This new Plan was approved and adopted by the Sun Corridor MPO Executive Board on November 14, 2023, with subsequent adoption by the MAG Regional

Council prior to the December 31, 2023 deadline. A copy of the plan can be found at Regional Air Quality Planning (azmag.gov).

Air Quality Conformity Analysis

The Sun Corridor MPO is required to undertake an air quality conformity analysis for two specific reasons:

1. To ensure that transportation investments in the TIP and RTP, taken as a whole, conform to state air quality plans for the federal air quality standards; and

2. To ensure that the transportation system as a whole does not cause new air quality violations nor worsen existing conditions.

The air quality conformity process establishes the connection between transportation planning and air quality. A regional emissions analysis must be conducted to assess the impacts that the TIP and RTP, taken as a whole, will have on emissions within an air quality nonattainment area.

Because the Pinal PM-10 and PM-2.5 nonattainment areas overlap the MAG and Sun Corridor MPO planning area boundaries, MAG and the Sun Corridor MPO have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to complete air quality conformity analyses for the Sun Corridor MPO region.

Conformity tests were conducted for analysis years of 2025, 2035, and 2050 for the build and no-build scenarios. For each test, the required emissions estimates are developed using the transportation and emission modeling approaches required under the Federal Transportation Conformity Rule.

The tests are conducted for PM-10 for the West Pinal PM-10 Nonattainment Area and for PM-2.5 and NOx for the West Central Pinal PM-2.5 Nonattainment Area. Findings indicated that the conformity interim emission tests were satisfied for all of these pollutants.

All analyses were conducted using the latest planning assumptions and emissions models in force at the time the conformity analysis began in October 2023. The Finding of Conformity for the Regional Transportation Plan 2050 Update was approved on June 11 by the Sun Corridor MPO Executive Board.

Transportation Control Measures for Particulates

One of the most important ways to reduce dust emissions is to pave, stabilize, and or reduce travel on dirt roads. Other examples of dust control measures are:

- Watering during construction activities
- Applying chemical stabilizers/dust suppressants during construction
- Reducing vehicle speeds on unpaved roads and parking lots

View the full Regional Transportation Plan 2050 Update online at:

Regional Transportation Plan 2050 Update - Sun Corridor MPO (scmpo.org)