

From Here To There ▶ Transportation Opportunities for Arizona

Highlights of the
94th Arizona
Town Hall
April 2009





“Transportation plays an integral role in the lives of Arizona residents. It affects every aspect of Arizonans’ lives by connecting Arizonans to their place of work and communities, providing life-sustaining goods and providing access to other parts of the country.”

- Report of the 94th Arizona Town Hall

As the “think tank” for Arizona’s business and community leaders, Arizona Town Hall has a proven record of developing recommendations that lead to effective reforms in a rapidly-growing state.

Participants in the 94th Arizona Town Hall, held in Tucson on April 19-22, 2009, discussed Arizona’s transportation issues ranging from gasoline prices and environmental concerns, to freight transportation and international trade. The result: a consensus of recommended actions to be taken to address Arizona’s current and future transportation needs.

Prior to the Town Hall session, participants from throughout the state reviewed a comprehensive background report developed by Arizona State University. Meeting in facilitated small groups for two days, the participants addressed a common set of discussion questions. Trained recorders captured points of consensus and the entire group gathered for a plenary session on the third day to adopt a report of findings and recommendations.

The final report and background research are published and made available to Arizona Town Hall members, the Arizona Legislature, other elected officials, public libraries, and the general public. Download or order copies online at www.aztownhall.org or call 602-252-9600 to request a copy.

A Snapshot of Transportation in Arizona

- ▶ While the U.S. population has more than doubled since 1925, the number of automobiles has climbed eightfold.
- ▶ Vehicle miles traveled (VMT), the best measure of demand for road capacity, has been growing rapidly. Nationally, 46% of recent growth of VMT was due to an increase in daily trips per person, with 10% due to longer trips.
- ▶ Because of its lower-density land development and relative lack of public transportation, Arizonans are more dependent on driving to work than the nation as a whole. Adding together the drive-alone and carpool shares, 88.7% of Arizonans drive to work, compared with 87.7% nationally. Arizonans use transit and walk significantly less, but carpool, bicycle, and work from home more.
- ▶ Gasoline prices are likely to be higher and more volatile in the future, posing a significant threat to Arizona families and its economy. Gas prices are largely driven by the world price of crude oil. Currently the U.S. consumes 24% of the world's oil, produces only 8%, and has only 2.4% of estimated recoverable oil reserves, whereas the Middle East and North Africa have an estimated 66% of reserves.
- ▶ As metro areas expand farther and farther, once-separate regions begin to merge. Experts recognize an emerging megapolitan region (the Sun Corridor) that will stretch almost continuously from Prescott, through Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas, all the way to Nogales.
- ▶ The impacts of continued growth, the lack of coordinated Sun Corridor governance, and concerns about how to fund necessary infrastructure have direct implications for transportation in the Corridor. To better compete with other emerging megapolitan areas, the Sun Corridor must meet these transportation infrastructure challenges.
- ▶ Individuals, and society as a whole, must consider costs and tradeoffs when choosing how to invest in and use the various modes of transportation available.
- ▶ Transportation systems create significant impacts on the environment at local, regional, and global scales. These include impacts on:
 - Air Quality
 - Greenhouse Gases
 - Stormwater Runoff
 - Noise Pollution
 - Natural Habitats
- ▶ Transportation is one of the more capital-intensive parts of the economy. Efficient transportation relies on investment in capital goods, from the transportation networks themselves, to the passenger and freight terminals where we access the networks, to the vehicles on the networks.
- ▶ Demand-side strategies aimed at reducing peak-hour vehicle trips include:
 - Flex-time and four-day workweeks
 - Carpooling
 - Telecommuting, online shopping, distance learning, and online social networking
 - Multipurpose trip-making
 - Shifting how we travel from cars to mass transit (including school buses) or non-motorized transportation
- ▶ Demand-side strategies aimed at shrinking the miles traveled by vehicles include:
 - Improving the balance of jobs and housing in communities
 - Mixed-use development
 - Master-planned communities
 - Infill development within central cities
 - Urban villages
 - Location-efficient mortgages that consider both mortgage and commuting costs in calculating a potential buyer's ability to pay, thus eliminating the built-in bias towards cheaper housing on the urban fringe (i.e., the "drive 'till you qualify" phenomenon)

- From Arizona State University's Background Report





Taking Action

The 94th Arizona Town Hall recommends that the following actions be taken to address Arizona's current and future transportation needs.

A. Establish a Citizen Transportation Review Commission

- The Commission should be coordinated by ADOT and composed of representatives of the governor, legislature, and stakeholders representing cities, towns, counties, MPOs and COGs, tribal communities, RTAs, NGOs, non-profits, private-sector leaders, and members of the public.
- The Citizen Transportation Review Commission should:
 1. Coordinate and assist in the execution of a comprehensive, multi-modal state transportation plan.
 2. Educate the public about the value of transportation improvements and effective and efficient transportation systems, as well as short-term and long-term transportation goals.
 3. Encourage public discourse to identify and prioritize the public's wants and desires and to obtain input on long-range transportation planning.
 4. Develop a "values-based vision" to inform transportation and land-use planning experts and decision makers.
 5. Identify funding levels and sources for transportation projects.
 6. Build support for a comprehensive legislative package seeking authorization to implement the action steps described above, and advocate for the enactment of such legislation.
 7. Work with ADOT and other transportation-related groups to discuss a realistic timeframe for the implementation of BQAZ and the recommendations of the 94th Arizona Town Hall.

“As Arizona has seen rapid population growth in many of its communities, transportation has often been an afterthought, and sufficient modes of transportation have not been implemented to keep pace with the creation of new housing developments and business centers.”

- Report of the 94th Arizona Town Hall

List of Abbreviations Used

ADOT - Arizona Department of Transportation

BQAZ - Building a Quality Arizona

COGs - Council of Governments

HURF - Highway User Revenue Fund

MPOs - Metropolitan Planning Organizations

NGOs - Non-governmental Organizations

RTAs - Regional Transportation Authorities

B. Incorporate Existing Resources, Studies and Reports

- Urge Arizona's Congressional delegation to become familiar with the Transportation for America platform and consider incorporating these principles in the reauthorization of federal transportation legislation.
- By 2010, coordinate and interpret the various BQAZ framework studies in a comprehensive way that includes:
 1. Clarification of the roles, objectives, authority, and missions of ADOT, the MPOs, COGs, and transit agencies relative to all forms of transportation planning, development, operations, and maintenance.
 2. Use of the BQAZ reports and findings, in addition to the 94th Arizona Town Hall report, to develop alternative funding sources and implement a statewide transportation initiative.
 3. Building on existing ADOT, regional, and local transportation and infrastructure studies to prioritize which projects are appropriate for the diverse communities of Arizona.

C. Protect and Secure Needed Funding

- Protect current funding sources and ensure that funds dedicated to transportation cannot be diverted by the legislature for non-transportation-related projects or expenses.
- Establish new, innovative, diverse, and reliable funding sources for transportation infrastructure and

maintenance. These funding efforts should specifically include the following elements:

1. Update the fuel tax to reflect inflation that has occurred since 1991, indexing the gas tax to account for inflation in the future, and possibly further increasing the fuel tax.
2. Encourage Arizona's Congressional delegation to aggressively pursue all available new transportation funding.
3. Remove statutory limitations (such as the current one-half cent cap) on counties' authority to allow sales tax referenda to go to the voters to provide additional transportation funding.
4. Encourage tribal governments to procure funding from the Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) Program.
5. Allow HURF monies to be used to fund public transit.
6. Encourage the regional use of available grant funds for mobility management programs designed to enhance collaboration and optimize the effectiveness of alternative transportation services and funds.
7. Implement a statewide development impact fee to pay for transportation infrastructure and capacity improvements.
8. Authorize and encourage private investment in Arizona's transportation system.

9. Plan ahead to transition from fuel taxes to a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) tax.
10. Implement tax increment financing (TIF).
11. Enable toll roads to be implemented.
12. By 2012, the Arizona State Legislature should refer a ballot measure to the voters that: (1) protects the use of HURF and other transportation trust funds for transportation only; and (2) provides a stable and sufficient statewide dedicated revenue stream for public transportation.

D. Improve Coordination Between Land-Use Planning and Transportation

- Create sustainable communities by encouraging connectivity between land-use planning, economic development, and transportation.
- Permits for new developments should require linkage to an existing transportation corridor or that increased transportation capacity is part of the land-use plan.
- Enact state trust land reform to allow for more efficient growth patterns, infrastructure, siting, and land conservation.



“There should be a statewide integrated decision-making process that would allow Arizona to be less reactive in its decision making and more focused on collaborative transportation planning.”

- Report of the 94th Arizona Town Hall

E. Integrate More Effectively with National Transportation Networks

- Develop and invest in local public transit and intercity rail, including high-speed rail, to ensure Arizona’s integration into the proposed nationwide passenger rail network.
- Collaborate with federal agencies and engage in detailed dialogue regarding interstate and national strategies to enable Arizona to benefit from a diverse national and global economy.

F. Create a Comprehensive Transportation Outreach and Education Initiative

- Utilize multiple communications disciplines and vehicles appropriate to informing the general public and specific transportation organizations on needs, initiatives, and work going on in the Arizona transportation sector.
- Incorporate information on short- and long-term needs—framed in ways to help average citizens understand why this matters to them and the urgency of ongoing support.
- Create public education programs about the link between land-use planning, housing, the creation of sustainable communities, and transportation.
- Tap all transportation organizations and groups to play a role in this education and outreach.

G. Engage the Private Sector

- Enact legislation at the state and federal level to allow for formation of public-private partnerships for transportation.

- Enact legislation at the state level to allow for the formation of the private forms of “design, build, and operate” for various elements of transportation.

H. Use New Technologies and Incentives

- Utilize new technologies, including broadband and intelligent transportation systems, to reduce congestion.
- Expand state incentive programs for alternative-fuel production, vehicles and refueling stations.

I. Update ADOT’s Role

- Update and improve ADOT’s role, scope, and mission in transportation planning and development to assure a comprehensive and statewide approach to transportation planning and development—including multi-modal, inter-modal, and regional considerations.

J. Take Individual Action

Individuals can have a significant impact on creating solutions for Arizona’s current and future transportation needs by:

- Contacting elected officials to encourage support of the changes proposed in the 94th Arizona Town Hall Report.

Use resources such as Project Vote Smart (<http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm>) to find contact information for all of your elected officials, including U.S. Senators and Representatives.

- Sending the 94th Arizona Town Hall Report to relevant stakeholders with cover letters that address specific items and recommendations of importance to these stakeholders.
- Making presentations about these recommendations to business, civic, non-profit, and social organizations.

For resources or speaker suggestions, contact the Arizona Town Hall.

- Creating a steering committee of Arizona leaders to begin building support throughout Arizona for improved transportation planning and establishment of the Citizen Transportation Review Commission. The steering committee should work to create the foundation for the Commission and the supporting coalition.

Additional Resources & Opportunities

To join existing efforts to pursue recommendations from the 94th Arizona Town Hall, contact the Arizona Town Hall office or become part of the Transportation Action Community at <http://actioncommunities.org/>.

For more information on factors influencing transportation in Arizona, download the full report from the 94th Arizona Town Hall at aztownhall.org/reports/94.asp.

Contact the following organizations for additional information:

▶ Arizona Organizations:

- Arizona Department of Transportation: www.azdot.gov
- Arizona Transit Association: www.azta.org
- Arizona Department of Commerce, Office of Smart Growth: www.azcommerce.com/SmartGrowth/Office
- Arizona Climate Action Initiative: www.azclimatechange.gov
- Valley Forward: www.valleyforward.org
- Local Initiative Support Corporation: www.lisc.org
- Arizona MPOs and COGs: www.mag.maricopa.gov/archive/AZ-COGs/Arizona_MPOs/pg_azMPOs.asp
[Note the links to each COG on the left.]
- Friends of Transit, Inc.: www.friendsoftransit.org
- Valley Metro: www.valleymetro.org
- Southwest Rail Corridor Coalition: <http://www.southwestrail.org/about>

▶ National and International Organizations:

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): www.ipcc.ch
[Search for most recent Assessment Report.]
- American Public Transportation Association: www.apta.com
- United States Department of Energy, Fuel Economy Information: www.fueleconomy.gov
- Transportation for America: www.t4america.org
- The Center for Transportation Excellence: www.cfte.org
- Alternative Fuels Data Center: www.afdc.energy.gov/afdc



We welcome your involvement,
questions, and perspectives.

One East Camelback Rd. | Suite 530
Phoenix, AZ 85012 | 602-252-9600
aztownhall.org

Since 1962, Arizona Town Hall has served as a “think tank” of Arizona leaders. Town Hall recommendations are a valuable resource for policymakers because they do not represent the agenda of a particular group or political perspective. Instead, Arizona Town Hall reports contain the informed consensus of Arizonans from different political parties, professions, and geographic areas of the state. A private, non-profit civic organization, Arizona Town Hall has served as a catalyst for conversations and recommendations that have influenced significant changes in Arizona’s public policy over the years. Countless local, state, and national leaders have cited Arizona Town Hall as an important factor in educating people about the multiple facets of complex issues and fostering the development of personal and professional leadership skills.

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