

Grand-35 Study FAQs

What is an Environmental Assessment (EA)?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires agencies to analyze, disclose, minimize and mitigate any adverse environmental impacts from projects that include federal funding. An EA is the NEPA document that has been prepared to evaluate potential impacts from the Grand-35 Study. This EA describes the need for the proposed action (i.e., Preferred Alternative), alternatives developed for the proposed action, the environmental impacts of the build alternatives and No-Build Alternative.

What is a Design Concept Report (DCR)?

A DCR is also prepared to document the engineering elements associated with the study. This includes interchange options, drainage modifications, traffic operations and safety, construction requirements and impacts to traffic during construction, summary of the EA, right-of-way requirements, cost and maintainability, to name just a few. These elements are evaluated for a range of reasonable build alternatives, as well as the no-build baseline alternative.

What is a No-Build Alternative?

The No-Build Alternative is used as a baseline, or a benchmark, to compare against the Build Alternative(s). The No-Build provides the Grand-35 Study team with a basis against which social, environmental and economic impacts can be measured. The No-Build Alternative represents the existing transportation system with ongoing maintenance and any improvement projects that have been previously programmed for construction and studies.

If approved, is there funding for construction?

Yes. Currently, the funding includes federal money and Highway User Revenue Funds through the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), generated through the voter-approved half-cent sales tax in Maricopa County.

When do you anticipate construction to start, if approved?

Construction on the Grand-35 project is anticipated to begin in Summer 2025, following the completion of the Final EA and DCR Phase, as well as the completion of the Design and Right-of-Way Acquisition Phase.

What are the proposed improvements?

The Preferred Alternative includes shifting 35th Avenue to the west. 35th Avenue would also be elevated to create a new intersection with Indian School Road. Indian School Road would be shifted to the north and would be elevated to create a new intersection with 35th Avenue. Both 35th Avenue and Indian School Road would pass over US 60 and the BNSF Railway. An elevated signalized intersection would be created between 35th Avenue and Indian School Road.

Two lanes would be provided in each direction of travel on 35th Avenue. 35th Avenue would accommodate the addition of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) which is currently being planned by an ongoing city of Phoenix project, and you can learn more at www.meetphoenixbrt.com. Three lanes would be provided in each direction of travel on Indian School Road. Indian School Road would also be able to accommodate a future high-capacity transit (HCT) route which is also being studied by the city of Phoenix and Valley Metro. Three lanes would be provided in each direction of travel on US 60 and US 60 would remain at-grade. Minor improvements would be included along US 60 to reconfigure the median and provide turn lanes at intersections.

Glenrosa Avenue would be extended to the west to create a new connector road that would restore connectivity between 35th Avenue and US 60. This new connector road would connect to 35th Avenue at Glenrosa Avenue and would connect to US 60 near 37th Avenue. This new connector road would provide one lane in each direction of travel.

West of 35th Avenue, Clarendon Avenue would be realigned to connect to Clarendon Avenue east of 35th Avenue and eliminate the existing offset intersection at 35th Avenue.

33rd Avenue would be extended north of Indian School Road and a new east-west local road would extend from 33rd Avenue to 35th Avenue. 33rd Drive would connect to the new east-west local road.

Are you anticipating right-of-way acquisitions for the Preferred Alternative?

The Preferred Alternative includes right-of-way acquisitions. Potential right-of-way impacts and access changes have been identified as part of this study which will be further refined during final design. Affected property owners will be contacted before and during the right-of-way acquisition process and during the DCR and Final Design stages of the project. Right-of-way plans will be developed based on the final design plans and property appraisals will be prepared for the affected properties and property owners will be contacted at that time.

Where can I find detailed maps of the Preferred Alternative?

You can find detailed maps of the Preferred Alternative on the study website at ADOTGrand35Study.com.

What happens if the Preferred Alternative is selected through this study?

If ADOT selects the Preferred Alternative in this study, the next steps would be to conduct final design and begin right-of-way acquisition. The study is expected to conclude in early 2024 with final design beginning in 2024. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2025.

How do I know if my property will be impacted?

Potential right-of-way impacts and access changes were identified during this study process and are being shared in the Draft EA and DCR. The public review of this Draft EA provides an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the proposed project and right-of-way acquisitions resulting from the Preferred Alternative. If the Preferred Alternative is selected, further engagement with the affected property owners would occur during final design and right-of-way process.

When will right-of-way be acquired and what is the right-of-way acquisition process?

Once the Preferred Alternative is selected, the study is completed, and funding for design is in place, then the project is anticipated to move into the final design phase in 2024. Specific right-of-way needs have been identified during the study. Right-of-way plans will be developed, and property appraisals will be prepared for the affected properties. Any questions on the right-of-way process can be directed to Dennis Haley at dhaley@azdot.gov or 602.712.7432.

If a Build Alternative is selected, how long will construction take and what will the traffic impacts be?

If the Preferred Build Alternative is selected to move forward, construction is expected to last approximately two years, but is dependent on many different factors. Temporary lane reductions and restrictions may be considered along with night construction operations. Because the new 35th Avenue bridge is close to the existing roadway alignment, full closures of 35th Avenue would likely be required during construction of the new roadway, roadway embankment, and bridges. Closures would likely be limited to a small segment of 35th Avenue between roughly West Clarendon Avenue and West Glenrosa Avenue, and could last up to 6 months in duration. During the closure, travel north and south of US 60/Grand Avenue and the BNSF tracks would need to use 27th Avenue, 31st Avenue, and 43rd Avenue, which are the nearest railroad crossings. Lane restrictions and closures on US 60 (Grand Avenue) would be minimized to the extent possible. Short-term closures of US 60 (Grand Avenue) would likely be required when the segment of the existing Indian School Road bridge over US 60 (Grand Avenue) is removed, and when the segment of the new bridges over US 60 (Grand Avenue) are constructed. The Draft EA includes environmental commitments and mitigation measures requiring the development of a traffic control plan and communication of that plan to the public before the start of construction.

How will businesses in the area be affected during construction? Will access to businesses be impacted?

ADOT is required to maintain access/entry to existing businesses during construction. If this is not achievable, then a particular property may need to be acquired by ADOT Right-of-Way and the owner will be compensated accordingly.

If the Preferred Alternative for intersection improvements is selected, what will the impacts be to pedestrians, bikes, and public transit during construction?

In general, ADOT will attempt to maintain pedestrian, bike, and transit access during construction. However, it is likely that some pedestrian and bike access will be restricted during construction. It is anticipated that the transit stops would remain open but may be moved to other locations during construction. As part of the final design, we will review these issues and work with the stakeholders to develop a plan for construction. A construction contractor would need to submit

any proposed construction-related restrictions and closures to ADOT and the city for review and approval and would need to provide alternative access wherever possible.

How could railroad operations be impacted?

The railroad operations will be maintained for the selected alternative as BNSF Railway will generally not allow any adverse impacts to their operations.

How will pedestrian, bike and transit facilities be improved if the Preferred Alternative for intersection improvements is selected?

The Preferred Alternative could include many different enhancements to the pedestrian, bicycle, and bus facilities such as additional or wider sidewalks, wider outside shoulders for bikes, separate bus pull-outs or new bus shelters.

What is a grade-separation?

A grade separation completely separates one of the roadways at the intersection to either raise or lower it through an overpass or underpass.

By 2050, the average delay at this intersection is expected to increase if no improvements are made. Is the average delay expected to decrease if improvements are made?

A comparison of the 2050 traffic delays with and without the proposed improvements shows that the traffic delays in 2050 along US 60 (Grand Avenue) are expected to decrease as the 6-legged intersection would be removed. Similarly, the traffic delays along 35th Avenue are expected to decrease as northbound and southbound traffic would not go through the 6-legged intersection. In addition, traffic along 35th Avenue would not be delayed by trains. In general, the overall travel times in 2050 along the three main roadways are expected to be reduced by implementing the proposed improvements.

Who would be responsible for funding if the project is built? How will it be paid for?

Currently, the funding includes federal money and Highway User Revenue Funds through the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), generated through the voter-approved half-cent sales tax in Maricopa County.

When will the public have an opportunity to learn more about and provide input on the intersection design options being considered?

ADOT is currently conducting public outreach and seeking public comments on the Preferred Alternative for the intersection and the Draft EA and DCR. The Preferred Alternative is being compared with a No-Build (or do nothing) Alternative in the Draft EA document. The public is able to review the Draft EA and DCR, and a public hearing will be held to present the Preferred Alternative on Oct. 25, 2023. The public will be able to provide their input at the hearing as well through other methods. All materials from the hearing, including the presentation, are available on adotgrand35study.com. The public can provide comments on the alternatives through Nov. 27, 2023.

Will noise walls be constructed?

ADOT considers mitigation for customers predicted to be impacted by highway traffic noise levels. Based on detailed noise studies, noise mitigation is not recommended for the Preferred Alternative. This is because a majority of the adjacent land uses (commercial, industrial) do not warrant mitigation and the projected noise level in other locations does not warrant mitigation, according to detailed noise study conducted for the project.

Will this project be constructed at the same time as the I-17/Indian School Rd project?

No, the I-17/Indian School Road interchange project is currently on hold pending further review. Could this project go away if funding is reduced? This would depend on several factors. Every year, the regional program is updated, and projects (including this one) could be delayed, or other projects could be advanced, based on funding availability and current priorities. This process is conducted by the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council which is comprised of members from 27 cities and towns and other agencies.

Why isn't one of the options to make this stretch of US 60/Grand Avenue between I-17 and Loop 101 a highway like US 60 in the east Valley?

This option was evaluated in previous studies and was not chosen. This section of US 60/Grand Avenue is much older than the US 60 Superstition Freeway and has substantial existing development along the corridor that would be costly to

acquire and result in significant community impacts. It is simply not feasible and not included in regional plans. The Regional Transportation Plan includes smaller projects to improve traffic capacity, safety, and multi-modal connections on the Grand Avenue corridor.

What are the current traffic volumes on Grand Avenue, Indian School Road and 35th Avenue? Which road has the most traffic?

Both Grand Avenue and Indian School Rd currently carry around 50,000 vehicles per day. 35th Avenue carries around 30,000 vehicles per day. By 2050, the traffic volumes on all three roads are expected to increase.

How will my comments be addressed?

Following our public hearing and comment period, the study team will review and evaluate all input from the partner agencies and the public. The selected alternative, combined with agency and public input will be documented in the Final EA, which will be published on the project website.