June 2010

Loop 303, Interstate 10 to US 60 (Grand Avenue)

Frequently Asked Questions

DESIGN

Q. Will Loop 303 be at grade, below grade or above grade between Waddell Road and Mountain View Boulevard?

A. The freeway profile along this segment will vary. Loop 303 will be partially depressed under Greenway Road and the grade will continue to decrease until it is fully depressed under Bell Road. As the freeway travels north from Bell Road, the grade will gradually rise to match the level of the existing freeway at Clearview Boulevard.

Q. How tall are the sound walls?

A. They vary in height, ranging from eight feet to 20 feet.

Q. Where the current project ends to the north, six lanes will feed into one lane. How will ADOT avoid a bottleneck at this location?

A. We will design Loop 303 so that it tapers down to a single lane until we construct the additional lanes north of Mountain View Boulevard. We are designing the segments of Loop 303 in phases, which will open at different times.

Q. What is a single point urban interchange (SPUI), such as the one you show at Loop 303 and Bell Road? Do we have any in the Valley?

A. A SPUI is a type of traffic service interchange that allows opposing left turns to proceed simultaneously. This design helps with traffic flow at interchanges with a relatively high volume of expected traffic. The interchange at Loop 101 and Bell Road is an example of a SPUI design.

TRAFFIC

Q. What are the current and anticipated future traffic levels on Loop 303?

A. According to ADOT's traffic study in the Design Concept Report for Loop 303 between Interstate 10 and US 60, the most recent traffic data available (2006 traffic counts) shows the current Loop 303 traffic volumes to range from an average of 20,000 to 23,000 vehicles per day on the section between I-10 and Bell Road, and an average of 14,000 vehicles per day on the section north of Bell Road.

Projected 2015 traffic forecasts for the initial six-lane freeway range from 57,600 vehicles per day between Bell Road and US 60 (Grand Avenue) to 109,600 vehicles per day between Camelback Road and Bethany Home Road. The average daily traffic volume for the corridor is forecast to be about 93,000 vehicles per day.

The 2030 traffic projections for Loop 303 are based on the assumption that Loop 303 will be expanded to a 10-lane freeway. The average daily traffic volume projected in 2030 for the Loop 303 corridor is about 144,000 vehicles per day.

Q. How much truck traffic is currently using Loop 303, and how much is truck traffic anticipated to increase?

A. ADOT's traffic study indicated that trucks comprise 13 to 17 percent of the existing traffic volumes on Loop 303, or an average of 1,500 trucks per day. For the initial six-lane freeway completed in 2015, ADOT estimates the truck traffic to increase to approximately 7,000 vehicles per day on the entire stretch of freeway between I-10 and US 60. For the ultimate 10-lane expansion of the freeway in 2030, ADOT estimates that truck traffic along this segment will increase to approximately 10,000 vehicles per day.

However, ADOT expects truck traffic to represent a much smaller percent of the overall traffic volumes on Loop 303 in the future – just 7 percent of the Loop 303 traffic in both 2015 and 2030.

Q. Is Loop 303 part of the CANAMEX Corridor, the designated truck route between Mexico and Canada? Did you account for CANAMEX truck traffic in your projections?

A. No, Loop 303 is not currently one of the designated corridors for the CANAMEX corridor, and therefore traffic on that corridor was not factored into the projections for Loop 303. For more information about the route, visit: www.canamex.org.

Q. You are showing single lane exits at Greenway. What is the anticipated traffic at that location?

A. A single lane ramp will accommodate the projected 2030 peak hour traffic volumes of approximately 1,000 vehicles using the ramps.

Q. When you did the planning, did you account for the future Whitman truck yard?

A. The projected traffic volumes used in the planning is based on the traffic model developed by the Maricopa Association of Governments. MAG uses land use elements of adopted general comprehensive plans for the cities, which mostly likely included the future Whitman truck yard.

NOISE

Q. Where are sound walls currently planned along this segment of Loop 303?

A. The current design plans for this segment of Loop 303 include sound walls on both sides of Loop 303 between Greenway Road and Clearview Boulevard, with the exception of the commercial corners at Bell Road and Greenway Road. A wall is also planned along the west side of Loop 303 between Clearview and Mountain View boulevards. The design plans do not currently include a sound wall along the east side of Loop 303 between Clearview and Mountain View boulevards, due to the projected future freeway noise levels at this location. However, based on community feedback, ADOT will reevaluate this section of Loop 303 prior to finalizing the design plans to determine if a noise wall is warranted at this location.

Q. Why isn't a sound wall planned on the east side of Loop 303 between Clearview and Mountain View boulevards near the golf course?

A. Based on ADOT's noise analysis and mitigation standards, this area did not warrant noise mitigation. The noise readings between Clearview and Mountain View boulevards are in the mid-50s now. We projected this segment to have noise levels ranging from the mid-50s to 63 decibels, once the six-lane freeway is built, because of the buffer provided by the golf course. An additional benefit of 3-4 decibel noise reduction from rubberized asphalt pavement will further reduce the projected noise level. However, ADOT will reevaluate this section of Loop 303 for noise mitigation, based on community feedback for a continuous wall.

Q. What is ADOT's standard for noise mitigation?

A. ADOT has the most stringent noise impact threshold in the country, which exceeds federal standards. ADOT's policy is to consider noise mitigation when projected freeway noise levels are equal to or exceed 64 decibels at residences, schools and other similar receivers.

Q. What if the noise is higher than projected after ADOT expands Loop 303? Does the noise level get reevaluated after construction?

A. ADOT conducts noise mitigation as part of freeway construction; we would not automatically reevaluate the noise upon completion, unless we heard major concerns. If we did, ADOT could conduct a follow-up noise analysis to see if additional noise mitigation is warranted. However, unless noise levels exceeded ADOT's threshold of 64 decibels, additional noise mitigation would not be warranted. It is important to note that the proposed noise mitigation for Loop 303 is based on the projected noise levels for the future freeway expansion to 10 lanes. An increase in freeway noise levels is likely to occur over time, as traffic levels increase along Loop 303, and has been factored into the noise mitigation plans.

Q. Is ADOT planning any other sound mitigation, such as rubberized asphalt?

A. Yes, Loop 303 will be paved with a top layer of rubberized asphalt paving, which can decrease noise levels by an additional 3-4 decibels. However, ADOT is not allowed to factor in this additional potential decrease from the use of rubberized asphalt in its noise analysis and mitigation efforts.

CONSTRUCTION

Q. When will Loop 303 be constructed between I-10 and US 60?

A. Construction to expand Loop 303 to a six-lane freeway between I-10 and US 60 is scheduled to begin in late 2010 or early 2011 and be complete in 2015. The first construction is expected to occur on the northernmost section between Peoria Avenue and Mountain View Boulevard. Segments of the new freeway will be opened to traffic as they are completed, starting with the section to the north, which is expected to be complete in late 2012 or early 2013. Construction of the interchange at Loop 303 and Grand Avenue is anticipated to begin in 2015 and be complete in 2017.

Q. How many traffic lanes will be maintained during construction?

A. ADOT's goal is to minimize construction impacts to traffic whenever possible. We anticipate maintaining at least one lane in each direction at peak hours during construction. The construction contractor will help determine the specific traffic control plan during construction. The intersection improvements currently under construction at Bell, Cactus and Waddell roads will also help maintain traffic flow during construction.

Q. Will the sound walls be in place before lanes are added on Loop 303?

A. We try to build the sound walls at the start of construction to help mitigate the noise from construction, as well as anticipated future traffic noise.