HOUGHTON ROAD CORRIDOR
TUCSON, ARIZONA
PRELIMINARY REGIONAL
TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES REPORT

FINAL

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INTRODUCTION

In June 2006, URS Corporation (URS) completed a "Master Streets Plan" which built upon data available, including transportation studies prepared by the City of Tucson, Pima County, Pima Association of Governments (PAG,) and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT.) This document focused only on the area included in the previous Houghton Area Masterplan (HAMP) plan, and did not include the expanded area to the south as reflected in the Houghton Road Corridor (HRC) Project Area.

Within this document, there was a discussion of regional transportation facilities planned or under design/construction within or adjacent to the original project area, at that time. Since that time, additional facilities may have been planned or previous plans may have been changed. Therefore, this report expands on the URS document by documenting changes that have occurred to the constructed and planned regional transportation facilities in the vicinity of the original HAMP and the Southlands areas and expands the discussion to include the full HRC Project Area.

PURPOSE & GOAL

The purpose of this document is to:

- Describe existing conditions, including roadway types and widths, intersection configurations and traffic control, traffic volumes and levels of congestion.
- Determine what regional transportation facilities are presently planned or under consideration, and where will they be located?
- What is the projected level of service of such facilities? Will it be adequate to serve the HRC Project Area?
- Where will transportation interchanges be located, and how will interchange locations affect land uses within the HRC Project Area?
- When will facilities presently under consideration be constructed, and by whom will they be funded and how?
- What role will commuter rail and other forms of public transit play in the transportation system?
- What public transit options are being explored and what effect will they have on development of the HRC Project? What effect can the HRC Project have on developing new public transit service or expansion of existing public transit service?

This document also includes an assessment of the following issues:

- What, if any, alternatives to the regional transportation facilities presently under consideration should be considered or actively promoted by Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) because of the beneficial effect on development of the HRC Project?
- Should ASLD consider implementing strategies that would advance the planned construction of any regional transportation facilities, and if so, which ones? What strategies are likely to be most effective?
What roadway sections are appropriate for use in developing master plans? This analysis will concentrate on arterials and collectors and include recommendations for number of lanes, locations of sidewalks and bike lanes, and right of way width.
CONCLUSIONS

Based on the review of a wide range of transportation related documents from the City of Tucson, Pima County, Pima Association of Governments, the Regional Transportation Authority and Arizona Department of Transportation, along with meetings with staff from many of these entities, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The roadway network serving the HRC project is currently rural in nature. However, based on the Regional Transportation Plan, Tucson and Pima County's Master Streets and Routes Plans and ADOT's preliminary findings of the I-10 Corridor Study, by 2026 the roadway network will have been improved to a level that supports development of the HRC.

2. ADOT does anticipate the placement of a new interchange between the existing Colossal Cave Road and Houghton Road traffic interchanges. This will likely be included in the Final I-10 Corridor Study, paving the way for connection of Desert Village Parkway to this traffic interchange to support full development of the HRC project.

3. ADOT also anticipates improvements to the existing Rita Road and Houghton Road traffic interchanges, as well as widening of I-10.

4. The HAMP and the Tucson Master Streets and Routes Plan both present a good framework for development of the major streets with the HRC project area. However, exact alignments for new roads can be developed based on terrain and master plan analysis.

5. Currently, there is no direct transit service to the HRC project area. The nearest transit route serves the Pima Community College East Campus which is in the northeast corner of Irvington Road and Pantano Road. This is also the location of the closest park and ride lot.

6. In the near term time frame, significant improvements to transit service within the HRC project area will occur. This will include a new bus route on Houghton Road, a new route serving Rita Ranch, a new park and ride lot near the Rita Road/I-10 traffic interchange and express bus service between this park and ride and Downtown Tucson/University of Arizona.

7. Although recommended for future study, it is unlikely that commuter rail will be extended to the HRC project area. The more likely termini would be downtown or near the Tucson International Airport, which is located west of the HRC site.

8. All programmed roadway improvements include provisions to serve non-motorized traffic. Most facilities will have on-street bike lanes/shoulders and off-street pathways. In
addition, there are several pathways not directly linked to roadways that are programmed, including a path along the Pantano Wash and between west of Houghton Road, between I-10 and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

9. The HAMP and the Tucson Master Streets and Routes Plan both include recommendations for multi-modal facilities, including pathways and bike lanes/shoulders.

10. Comparisons between the PAG Model Street Network with Tucson's Master Streets and Routes Plan indicate a difference in the north termination point for Desert Village Parkway (DVP). The PAG Model defined alignment terminates at the intersection of Houghton Rd and Irvington Roads, while the MS&R indicates the termination at Drexel Rd (approximately 1-mile south of Irvington Rd). Preparation of the circulation plan based on the final land plan and subsequent traffic modeling will provide interim and ultimate phasing scenarios of the roadway network. This evaluation will help determine roadways to be built to a capacity and alignment necessary to carry the traffic at certain design years.

11. Comparisons between the PAG model Street Network and the Houghton Area Master Plan (HAMP) with Tucson's Master Streets and Routes Plan (MS&R) indicate a difference in the south termination point for Desert Village Parkway (DVP). The PAG Model and HAMP indicates the termination at I-10, while the MS&R show DVP connecting with Rocket Road and terminating at Houghton Road approximately ¼-mile north of I-10. Preparation of the circulation plan based on the final land plan and roadway network. This evaluation will assist in determining if DVP will need to cross the Union Pacific Railroad as shown on all the existing reports from the City of Tucson and PAG.

In terms of what ASLD should do to advance development of regional transportation facilities, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Actively promote future studies for high capacity transit corridors that would service the HRC project area. Promote transit oriented design to encourage the transit to come to the site.
2. Work with ADOT to secure funding for improvements to I-10, the new traffic interchange identified above and the improvements to the existing Rita Road and Houghton Road traffic interchange.
3. Look at using a CFD to fund improvements external to the HRC project area to provide connections to the existing and proposed regional transportation network.