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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Forward

This Final Access Management Plan is submitted in accordance with Contract No. 99-12 between the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and Jacobs Civil Inc. The plan presents the results of a study of access management requirements along United States Route 93 (US 93) between the Santa Maria River and Wikieup, within Mohave and Yavapai Counties. The entire project is within ADOT’s Kingman District.

The purpose of the Access Management Plan is to document the need for access management and provide a plan that identifies access management features needed to protect the safety and function of US 93 while providing access between US 93 and adjacent properties that will accommodate anticipated uses of the properties. The Access Management Plan presents partial and full access control features to accomplish the above requirements.

Partial access control is being implemented as an interim measure through the ADOT District permit process as the four-laning of US 93 is completed. Full access control will be implemented as development along the corridor progresses to the extent that full control is necessary to preserve safety and function. **The Final Access Management Plan will provide the basis for designation of this section of US 93 as an access controlled highway by the Arizona Transportation Board.** It will be desirable to publish a public notice of the intended designation of a portion of US 93 as an access controlled highway, and afford an opportunity for public comment prior to the Board’s action

Figure 1-1 shows the location of the study. Figure 1-2 identifies the limits of the study, beginning about 0.8 mile south of the Santa Maria River Bridge (Milepost [MP] 161.5) and extending northwesterly along US 93 for 34.5 miles to the north end of the Big Sandy River Bridge at MP 127, about two miles south of the Community of Wikieup.

## 1.2 Need for Access Management

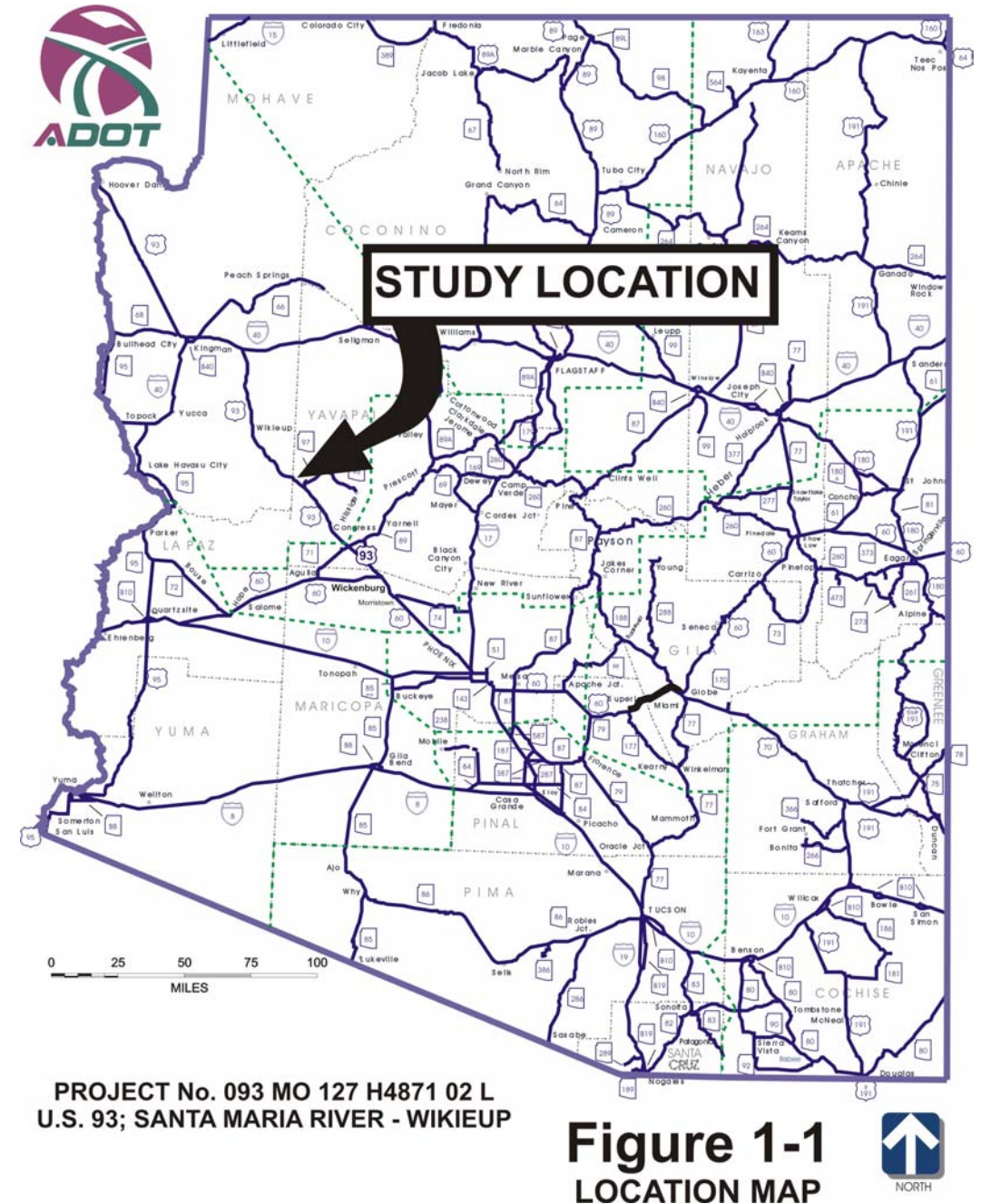
Major transportation corridors such as US 93 are intended to allow commerce to take place and the public to travel safely and efficiently over large distances. Properties adjacent to major transportation corridors are attractive to developers, commercial

businesses and the public for development of land use activities that are dependent upon vehicular access to the corridor. Over time increasing numbers of crossroads and turnouts intersecting the highway and the increasing volume of vehicles entering and leaving the highway will cause conflicts with through traffic that result in loss of capacity and diminished safety. As the travel congestion increases, the level of service provided by the major transportation facility decreases. Management of access by restricting the number of access points and by locating and designing permitted access points to minimize conflicts with through traffic is a successful strategy for maintaining a high level of service on the highway while accommodating increasing numbers of vehicles to and from adjacent developments.

US 93 is within the designated NAFTA/CANAMEX corridor and is planned for ultimate construction to Interstate standards. Improvements will be accomplished over an extended period of time, perhaps 20 or more years, and will involve several reconstruction segments. US 93 was designated the Joshua Forest Scenic Road from MP 126.5 to MP 180.0 by Arizona Transportation Board Resolution No. 93-01-A-02, in January 1993. This entire study is within the limits of the Scenic Road designation.

The section of US 93 within the study limits of this project is currently being designed and reconstructed as a four-lane facility. Implementation of full access control, which will require traffic interchanges and access roads, will not occur for a substantial number of years. However, implementation of partial access control as soon as possible is necessary to preserve the function of the highway as a safe and efficient transportation corridor (See Section 2.3).

Direct access between a property and a highway may be closed and replaced with alternative access via a frontage road or another public road abutting the property.





## 1.3 Agency Coordination

Meetings were held with representatives of public agencies that control substantial amounts of property within the study area, or that have jurisdictional interests in property or activities along the study corridor. During the meetings strip maps showing proposed access control were reviewed and discussed. Both Partial Access Control, as an interim measure, and Full Access Control as an ultimate measure were covered.

The following discussion of the coordination meetings reflects input during the meetings, and does not reflect agreement between ADOT and the other agencies, nor a commitment that ADOT accepts the agency comments.

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): The BLM is a major property owner along the US 93 Corridor. BLM recognizes that full access control will ultimately be implemented and that partial access control will be an interim measure. When access points to US 93 are consolidated BLM will require that at least one access point be provided for each road network that intersects US 93. Road network, as referred to here, means that in locations with several roads that exit the highway, but intersect each other in the backcountry, all exits from US 93 may be closed except one. They desire that mileage to access public lands not be increased by more than 3 to 5 miles maximum. They will provide specific comments when the study is available for their review.
- Arizona State Land Department (ASLD): The ASLD is a major property owner along the southerly one-third of the study area. The ASLD representatives indicated that the partial access control to be implemented as an interim measure will meet the agencies needs. It is difficult for their agency to commit to full access control measures at this time if the implementation will not occur for 15 or 20 years. They prefer to address right-of-way and access issues when they are needed.

New agreements/understandings between ADOT and ASLD may come about in the future. Actions between ADOT and ASLD will be modified accordingly.

- Arizona Game and Fish Dept. (AG&FD): The AG&FD is concerned with protection and preservation of wildlife and with public access to recreational and hunting areas. The AG&FD representatives indicated that both the partial and full access

features as reviewed will provide needed access from their perspective.

The AG&FD will require assurances that interchange ramps and frontage roads will be constructed so as to avoid wildlife crossings where possible and so they do not impede wildlife crossings. If ramps or frontage roads must cross wildlife crossings, they should be crossings that provide suitable vertical clearance for larger animals. Protective measures taken during the current four-laning of US 93 are to be maintained and carried through any new roadways needed to implement access control. An example is protection of Desert Tortoise habitat. Culverts that provide for tortoise crossing will have to be extended and tortoise fencing will be needed between roadways. They also expressed the need to retain the natural appearance of the area. An example is re-use of boulders that are removed during construction.

As individual projects are identified for implementation of full access control the development process will address the NEPA and permitting requirements.

- Mohave County: Mohave County has jurisdiction over the Mohave County Road system and is an approving agency for planning and development within the County. After construction, ADOT will initiate the process of transferring frontage road right-of-way and maintenance responsibilities to the County. Frontage roads will be constructed to ADOT standards with County input to assure the road meets or exceeds their standards.

Coordination between ADOT and the County on an on-going basis is essential to manage access along highways where ADOT has not acquired access rights. Approval of subdivisions or developments that result in individual properties with small frontages along State highways should include internal road systems to serve as collector roads from the State highway to each property, thus avoiding multiple access points directly to the State highway.

- Yavapai County: Yavapai County has jurisdiction over the Yavapai County Road system and is an approving agency for planning and development within the County. After construction, ADOT will initiate the process of transferring frontage road right-of-way and maintenance responsibilities to the County. Frontage roads will be constructed to ADOT standards with County input to assure the road meets or

exceeds their standards. Yavapai County representatives expressed concern with ADOT transferring isolated sections of roadways to County jurisdiction. They may be unable to maintain isolated sections that require extensive travel to get to.

Yavapai County officials have stated that Yavapai County will not accept new roads such as frontage roads unless there are negotiations with ADOT to offset any additions to the County, such as transfer of County roads to the State system where County roads are functioning as State roads. Although this is the County's position, the Arizona Transportation Board has the authority to transfer routes to the local agency without their agreement.

Coordination between ADOT and the County on an on-going basis is essential to manage access along highways where ADOT has not acquired access rights. Approval of subdivisions or developments that result in individual properties with small frontages along State highways should include internal road systems to serve as collector roads from the State highway to each property, thus avoiding multiple access points directly to the State highway.