

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northern Parkway is a planned regional transportation facility that extends approximately 12 miles from SR 303L (Estrella Freeway or Loop 303) to US 60 (Grand Avenue) and will replace Northern Avenue for a portion of this distance. The project was first conceived by the Glendale Citizens Advisory Committee for Transportation Issues in 2001 during the preparation of the Glendale Transportation Plan. Since then, it was included in ballot initiatives for funding and approved by the voters in Glendale in 2001, Proposition 400 county-wide vote in 2004, and Peoria in 2005. The project is included in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) prepared by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the Maricopa County Major Streets and Routes Plan, the Glendale Transportation Plan, and in the Glendale General Plan Amendment (December 21, 2005).

A committee was formed comprised of staffs from Glendale, Peoria, Maricopa County, El Mirage, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), and Luke Air Force Base (AFB). A Design Concept Report was prepared and published in 2003. Since that time, and with the regional funding approved through Proposition 400, this revised and updated Design Concept Report was prepared. In cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), an Environmental Assessment is being prepared for the project so that federal funds may be used for the project.

The proposed Northern Parkway will be an enhanced arterial street with grade-separated intersections (GSI) at major cross streets to eliminate the major traffic signals on Northern Parkway. The resulting roadway would have approximately twice the traffic-carrying capacity of a typical arterial and would enable traffic to average speeds of 45 miles per hour (mph) as compared to typical arterials with average speeds between 25 and 35 mph. Northern Parkway would provide a much-needed higher speed, higher-capacity east-west route in the central portion of the West Valley where no freeways are planned. Interstate 10 (I-10) is 6 miles to the south, and SR 101L/Agua Fria Freeway (Loop 101) (east-west portion) is 8 miles to the north. The Northern Parkway will link central Glendale and southern Peoria to the rapidly developing far West Valley.

Selection of the Northern Avenue Corridor

Northern Avenue is one of only a few continuous east-west streets from Grand Avenue to Loop 303. It is strategically located on the boundary between Glendale and the cities of Peoria and El Mirage. It is equidistant between I-10 and Bell Road, and it lies near Luke AFB. There is less existing urban development adjacent to Northern Avenue than other streets. The Northern

Parkway, when combined with eight recently constructed grade separations on Grand and three more planned (at 51st Avenue, 35th Avenue, and 19th Avenue), will create a new, high-capacity corridor, connecting the West Valley from Loop 303 to central Phoenix. Several alternative corridor alignments were identified and evaluated between Glendale and Olive Avenues. The Northern Avenue corridor shifting to the Butler Drive mid-section line west of Dysart Road was found to be the best overall alignment.

Purpose and Need for Northern Parkway

The Northern Parkway Management Committee built on work by the Glendale Citizens Advisory Committee for Transportation Issues (CACTI) group and confirmed the following needs for Northern Parkway:

- Serve population growth in the West Valley.
- Improve travel time between SR 303L and US 60 (Grand Avenue).
- Provide regional connectivity to other regional facilities in the area including SR 303L, SR 101L, and US 60.
- Improve regional facility transportation spacing in the area as it develops.
- Provide an additional Agua Fria River bridged crossing to ensure safe, reliable access at all times to the growing area west of the Agua Fria River.
- Improve east-west street traffic flow by providing a free flow route that can accommodate a large amount of traffic to compensate for the limited street network.
- Implement regional and local plans to improve traffic flow in the West Valley.
- Reduce accident rates by reducing the number of traffic signals and access points.

Preferred Concept

The most unique feature of the preferred Northern Parkway concept is the inclusion of 10 Grade Separation Intersections at north-south arterials. The GSI will allow Northern Parkway to be free flow at these locations. The ramp connections from/to the parkway will have a signalized intersection with the arterial.

Northern Parkway is proposed to have three through lanes in each direction plus an auxiliary lane between GSIs. A barrier median will be provided throughout most of the project but some areas will have a landscaped median. The three lanes would continue over or under the GSI. Figure ES-1 illustrates an elevated GSI.



FIGURE ES-1
Prototype Grade Separated Intersection

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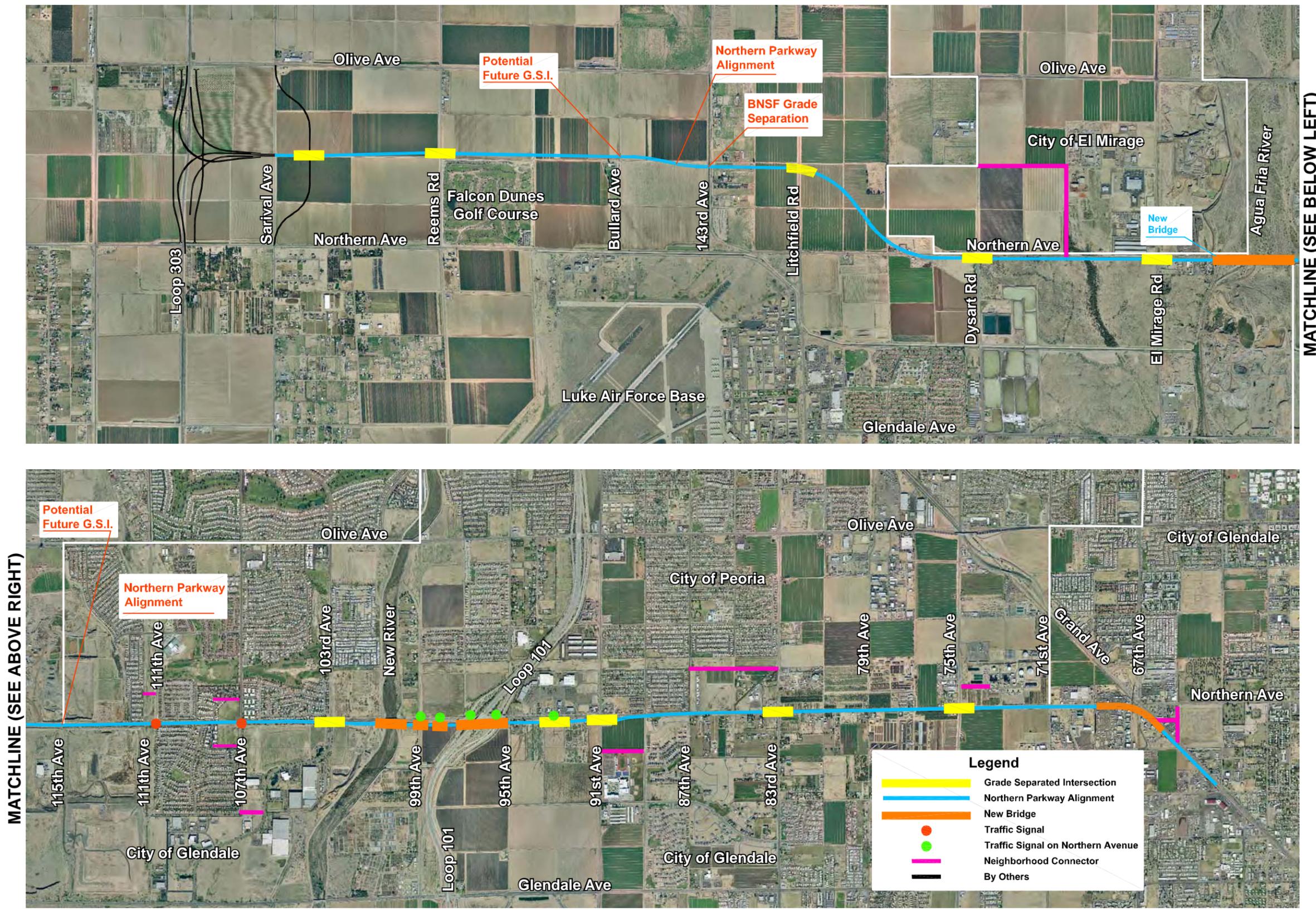


FIGURE ES-2
OVERVIEW OF PREFERRED NORTHERN PARKWAY CONCEPT

Between 103rd and 91st avenues, a unique configuration was developed that includes maintaining a portion of Northern Avenue to provide access to properties and to Loop 101. A separate fully access controlled bypass will be provided for the parkway that will be aligned to the south of Northern Avenue. The bypass will be elevated over 99th Avenue, Loop 101, 93rd Avenue, and 91st Avenue and depressed under 103rd Avenue. It will have three lanes in each direction plus an auxiliary lane between the ramps.

The existing Northern Avenue interchange at Loop 101 will need to be widened and modified but will function similarly as today. The bypass will carry at least half of the future east-west traffic so that Northern Avenue at Loop 101 can accommodate the remainder of the traffic.

From 91st Avenue to 71st Avenue, Northern Parkway will replace Northern Avenue. GSI are planned at 83rd and 75th avenues. No signals are planned on Northern Parkway in this section. Three neighborhood connector streets are planned to restore full access: (1) for Rovey Estates to 91st Avenue; (2) between 87th and 83rd avenues 0.25 mile north of Northern; and (3) for the Salt River Project (SRP) Agua Fria Generating Station. Curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lighting and landscaping will be provided.

At US 60 (Grand Avenue), a direct flyover ramp is planned to connect the west leg (Northern Parkway) to the southeast leg of Grand Avenue. Eastbound traffic on Northern Parkway can use this flyover to move uninterrupted to Grand Avenue. The reverse movement can also be made on this flyover. The flyover would be in the median of the parkway and of Grand Avenue. Improvements to the intersection of Grand Avenue and Myrtle Avenue near downtown Glendale will be needed to accommodate the increased traffic on Grand expected from Northern Parkway.

Northern Avenue will continue eastward from the beginning of the Grand Avenue flyover (71st Avenue) to connect with Grand Avenue at the signalized intersection as it does today. Northern Avenue would be widened at the intersection to provide four through lanes in each direction and a westbound right-turn lane. All left turns at this intersection would be prohibited but be accommodated by the existing or planned connector streets.

Northern Parkway is planned as a major traffic thoroughfare so that bicycles and local bus service are discouraged along this roadway. Parallel routes are available.

The right-of-way required for the planned parkway varies from 435 feet on the western portion where a drainage channel is required to a minimum of 140 feet between GSI on the eastern end. The eastern portion GSI are designed to fit in 255 feet of right-of-way. Glendale and Peoria are actively preserving right-of-way as development plans are presented or hardship cases arise.

Public and Agency Involvement

In 2002, a committee was formed to begin the development of the concept for the Northern Parkway. Agency stakeholders included: Glendale, Peoria, Maricopa County, El Mirage, ADOT, and Luke AFB. A design concept report was published in October 2003. After passage of Proposition 400, the committees were reformed to guide the further development and refinement of the process.

Public meetings specifically addressing the Northern Parkway were held in February and July 2003 and in June and December 2005. An agency scoping meeting was held in February 2005. Meetings with individual neighborhoods were held in January through March 2006. A public hearing will be held when the draft environmental assessment is completed.