

# Direct impacts of the Interstate 11 West Option: The talking points

## ENVIRONMENTAL

### Impacts to public lands and protected areas

- The I-11 West Option would damage natural resources and degrade the visitor experience on public lands. It is proposed within just a few hundred feet of Ironwood Forest National Monument, Saguaro National Park, and Tucson Mountain Park.
- Other impacted lands include Tribal lands owned by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O'odham Nation, open space properties purchased and protected under Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and Section 10 Habitat Conservation Plan, and the Tucson Mitigation Corridor.

### Air quality and climate impacts

- Constructing a new freeway through undeveloped desert would increase vehicle travel and greenhouse gas emissions, with impacts on air quality in Pima County. The county already faces challenges in meeting federal air quality standards.

### Groundwater impacts

- In 2019, the City of Tucson opposed the I-11 West Option because it would place a freeway adjacent to the City's major water supply — Tucson Water's properties in Avra Valley. The project cannot guard against a toxic spill that would threaten Tucson's most vital resource.

### Permanent change in landscape character

- The I-11 West Option would destroy the rural character of the Altar and Avra Valleys, cause significant noise, air, and light pollution, and encourage urban sprawl.

## WILDLIFE

### Threats to protected species

- The I-11 West Option would destroy habitat for the threatened cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl and the endangered Pima pineapple cactus, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Yuma Ridgway's Rails, and Southwestern Willow Flycatchers.

### Wildlife corridors

- Wildlife already struggles with existing infrastructure, such as Interstate 10 and the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal, which moves Colorado River water across Arizona.
- The I-11 West Option would isolate the Tucson Mountains between I-11 to the west and I-10 to the east, creating highway barriers that would significantly restrict wildlife movement.
- Further fragmentation would destroy the ability of species such as desert bighorn sheep and Sonoran Desert tortoises to disperse, roam, find new mates, and expand their home ranges.

- The Bureau of Reclamation’s Tucson Mitigation Corridor was created to offset impacts from the construction of the CAP canal in the Avra Valley, which interrupts existing wildlife corridors.
- If the I-11 West Option cuts through the Tucson Mitigation Corridor, animals will have nowhere else to go; it would also violate the purpose for which these lands were set aside.

## COMMUNITY

### Cultural impacts

- The I-11 West Option would cause irreversible harm to culturally significant landscapes, sacred sites, archaeological sites, and the traditional lands of the Tohono O’odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

### Impact on tourism, recreation, and scientific research

- Recreation hubs for the region, such as the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Saguaro National Park, Tucson Mountains, and Ironwood Forest National Monument, would be directly and negatively affected.
- Scientific research at the nearby Kitt Peak Observatory would be compromised by increased nighttime lighting, and other dark sky landscapes — including Saguaro National Park West — would also be threatened.

### Displacement

- Many people live or maintain working landscapes along the I-11 West Option, including communities that may not be able to engage with or be aware of the Federal Highway Administration’s public input process.
- Homes and properties could be forcibly condemned to construct the I-11 West Option, and nearby property values would be lowered, with additional impacts on residents’ quality of life.

### Cost and length vs. the East Option

- The I-11 West Option would cost more to build than the proposed I-11 East Option, which would co-locate I-11 with I-19 and I-10 through Tucson. It would also be longer.

### Economic Impacts

- The I-11 West Option would divert travelers and freight away from Tucson’s downtown and established business districts, reducing economic activity for local businesses that rely on visitors passing through the region.

**NO mitigation measures can offset these negative impacts!**

For the route map and more info, [scan below](#) or visit [stopi11.com](http://stopi11.com).

