



Board of Supervisors Memorandum

September 16, 2014

Sonoran Corridor or the Auxiliary Interstate Highway

I. Background

In 1986, Sahuarita Road from Interstate 19 to a connection with Interstate 10 was added to the state highway system as a state route. Typically, a state route designation is a precursor to state highway designation and future federal highway designations. The state route designation of this corridor allowed state funding of various study efforts to construct a state highway.

The State of Arizona, via the Arizona Department of Transportation, conducted extensive route studies from 1987 through 1990 to find consensus for a surface transportation facility of high-speed capacity connecting Interstates 10 and 19. No less than nine location alternatives were examined in these earlier studies; all of which have led to no consensus or acceptance of an alignment until recently.

In January 2012, the County prepared a draft updated economic development plan, which was distributed throughout the community for public comment. In November 2012, after review of the 130 public comments received, the final report, *Pima County Economic Development Plan – 2012 to 2014*, was presented to the Board of Supervisors. A key strategy of this economic development plan was protecting Raytheon Missile Systems, the region's largest employer, and to enable future expansion of operations should Raytheon desire to do so.

II. Sonoran Corridor Concept

The Sonoran Corridor alignments were accelerated as the need to relocate Hughes Access Road and remove expansion constraints for Raytheon Missile Systems became obvious and urgent. The most direct interstate auxiliary highway connection between Interstates 19 and 10 would have been to extend a new surface transportation highway from Rita Road at Interstate 10 along the Old Vail Highway alignment following a portion of the relocated Hughes Access Road, now known as Aerospace Parkway, and connecting to Interstate 19 at the Papago Interchange. This route became problematic, primarily due to significant archeological impacts of any proposed roadway alignment that would adversely impact the San Xavier District of the Tohono O'odham Nation. While the route provided the most direct surface transportation access to connect existing and emerging aerospace, technology and manufacturing employment centers in the metropolitan area, it did not provide advantages related to Mexico trade that an alignment further south would have

facilitated. Hence, a combination of using the Old Vail Highway alignment and connecting further south to an alignment acceptable to the San Xavier District of the Tohono O'odham Nation now defines the alignment for continuing planning and implementation of the Sonoran Corridor. Figure 1 defines the planned Sonoran Corridor or auxiliary interstate highway.

III. Aerospace Parkway, Hughes Access Road Relocation: A Subproject of the Sonoran Corridor

Relocating the existing Hughes Access Road as the Aerospace Parkway is a funded Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) project being implemented by Pima County in cooperation with a number of parties, including the Tucson Airport Authority (TAA), City of Tucson and the Federal Aviation Administration. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is necessary prior to County acquisition of right of way from TAA, which is in process, and plans have been completed. It is anticipated the project will be bid and constructed during Calendar Year 2015. Figure 2 defines the planned Aerospace Parkway improvements, which are budgeted at \$12.7 million.

IV. Economic Development Benefits of the Surface Transportation Sonoran Corridor or Auxiliary Interstate Highway

Development of this high-speed and ultimate high-capacity surface transportation linkage between Interstates 19 and 10 connecting the region's existing aerospace, technology and manufacturing employment centers will provide significant additional economic development benefits to the region.

First, the adequate buffering of Raytheon allows for their future expansion. The passage of Aerospace Parkway through lands owned by the County and TAA allows for the potential future development of a major aerospace, defense, and technology business and research park of similar size and capacity to other successful employment centers located near international airports. The surface transportation auxiliary interstate highway will complement and accelerate the development of a major key logistics center in southern Arizona, with easy and open access to intercontinental and international rail lines for freight shipment and TIA for air cargo development. The area in the vicinity of TIA, because of its immediate adjacency to existing rail freight facilities, the Port of Tucson and two interstate highways, will become a major logistics center of the Southwest, with the addition of the Sonoran Corridor as a limited access interstate auxiliary highway. Figure 3 shows the economic development logistics advantage of the Sonoran Corridor.

V. Sonoran Corridor Improvement Phases

Overall corridor improvements are being phased as shown in Figure 4. The first phase of improvements is the Aerospace Parkway development. As stated previously, this project is already funded, estimated to cost 12.7 million, and is shown in red on Figure 4. The second phase, which is critical in connecting the existing Aerospace, Technology and Manufacturing Employment Centers in the vicinity of Tucson International Airport (TIA) and the UA Science and Technology Park, is estimated to cost \$31 million and is shown in blue on Figure 4. The County is currently conducting conceptual design and developing conceptual project estimates for possible inclusion of this phase in a November 2015 bond election. Completion of this phase of the project will provide direct, high-speed surface transportation linkage between the UA Science and Technology Park and the TIA vicinity existing employment centers.

The third phase of the Sonoran Corridor development is the nine-mile, north/south leg that connects Old Vail Connection to Interstate 19 through the San Xavier District and is shown in orange on Figure 4. Conceptual planning, in consultation with the San Xavier District and others, is currently underway. Once consultations and approvals have been received, appropriate cost estimates can be developed for inclusion and funding under this segment of the Sonoran Corridor, which will likely require allocation of RTA funding available through this metropolitan planning organization's transportation funding allocation process.

VI. San Xavier District Consultation

Consultation has occurred with the Tohono O'odham Nation, the San Xavier District, and Desert Diamond Casino beginning in April 2013, including planning sessions, two public San Xavier District Council meetings, and archeological review by the Nation's Archeologist, Peter Steere. Additionally, a meeting was convened with 16 major stakeholders that had some interest in the route near Pima Mine Road and Old Nogales Highway. While there are a number of steps remaining in the process, these consultations have resulted in a conceptual alignment that all parties feel is appropriate to continue to pursue.

VII. County Actions Required to Advance Sonoran Corridor Implementation

While the County continues to take direct implementation action for the Aerospace Parkway, at least two other actions of the County will be required to advance Sonoran Corridor implementation. These are:

1. Amendment of the Major Streets and Routes Plan to recognize and accommodate the Sonoran Corridor Alignment.

2. Initiation of establishment proceeding to establish the Sonoran Corridor as a County highway from Interstate 19 to Interstate 10.

These are appropriate steps in the implementation of County highways and are for unrelated purposes. Both actions are described below. One action is being requested of the Board of Supervisors at its September 16, 2014 meeting.

Beyond these steps required to facilitate Pima County's future actions in implementing highway improvements along this corridor, we will pursue the inclusion of this corridor into the State Highway system. The inclusion of this roadway in the State's system will enhance opportunities for the application of State and Federal funding in the eventual implementation of a limited access highway between the two interstate highways in the southern portion of our region. Given the significant costs associated with such a facility, the incorporation of other non-local funding sources is an important and necessary strategy that must be pursued.

1. Amendment of the County's Major Streets and Routes Plan

The County, in the unincorporated area, has jurisdiction over land use. Included in the County's Zoning Code is the Major Streets and Routes Plan. This plan is a document intended to inform landowners of the County's plans regarding major highways requiring right of way dedication or set aside pursuant to existing state law.

The inclusion of the Sonoran Corridor or auxiliary interstate highway in the County's Major Streets and Routes Plan informs the landowners who may be adjacent to the proposed surface transportation improvement that a future corridor is planned and that right of way dedication may be required if the landowner chooses to have the land use or zoning of the property changed pursuant to the County Code and procedures for land use changes established for state law.

The overall length of the proposed Sonoran Corridor transportation segment is 16 miles. The Major Streets and Routes Plan amendment has been approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and will be on the Board of Supervisors agenda for approval on September 16, 2014. The Major Streets and Routes Plan is only applicable to lands in the unincorporated area of Pima County. It is not applied to land in the San Xavier District or any lands that would lie inside the City of Tucson. Along the proposed route of the Sonoran Corridor, the ownership distribution is as follows:

- 48 percent within the City of Tucson; of which 84 percent is vacant State Trust Land; 9 percent is vacant City owned land; 6 percent is vacant federal land, and; 1 percent is owned by a private utility.
- 28 percent within the unincorporated area of Pima County; of which 70 percent ownership is private and 30 percent is owned by TAA.

- 13 percent is within the San Xavier District of the Tohono O'odham Nation, and 12 percent is existing roadway.

Figure 5 shows the various jurisdictions through which the Sonoran Corridor passes.

The County will request the City of Tucson take steps similar to those of the County regarding placing the Sonoran Corridor on the City of Tucson's Major Streets and Routes Plan as a high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access corridor.

2. Establishment as a County Highway

Based on existing State law and case law, the County can expend public monies and County funds on streets and highways that pass through or are within a city or town, but in order to do so must first establish the highway pursuant to existing State law. The next step will be to ask the Board of Supervisors to establish the corridor in its entire length, with concurrence from the San Xavier District of the Tohono O'odham Nation and the City of Tucson. This will allow for further development of the roadway and the expenditure of public funds, including County General Obligation bonds that could be approved for developing a phase of the surface transportation corridor improvements.

Recommendation

I recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the following:

1. Amendment of the Major Streets and Routes Plan to recognize and accommodate the Sonoran Corridor Alignment.
2. Initiation of establishment proceeding to establish the Sonoran Corridor as a County highway from Interstate 19 to Interstate 10.

Respectfully submitted,

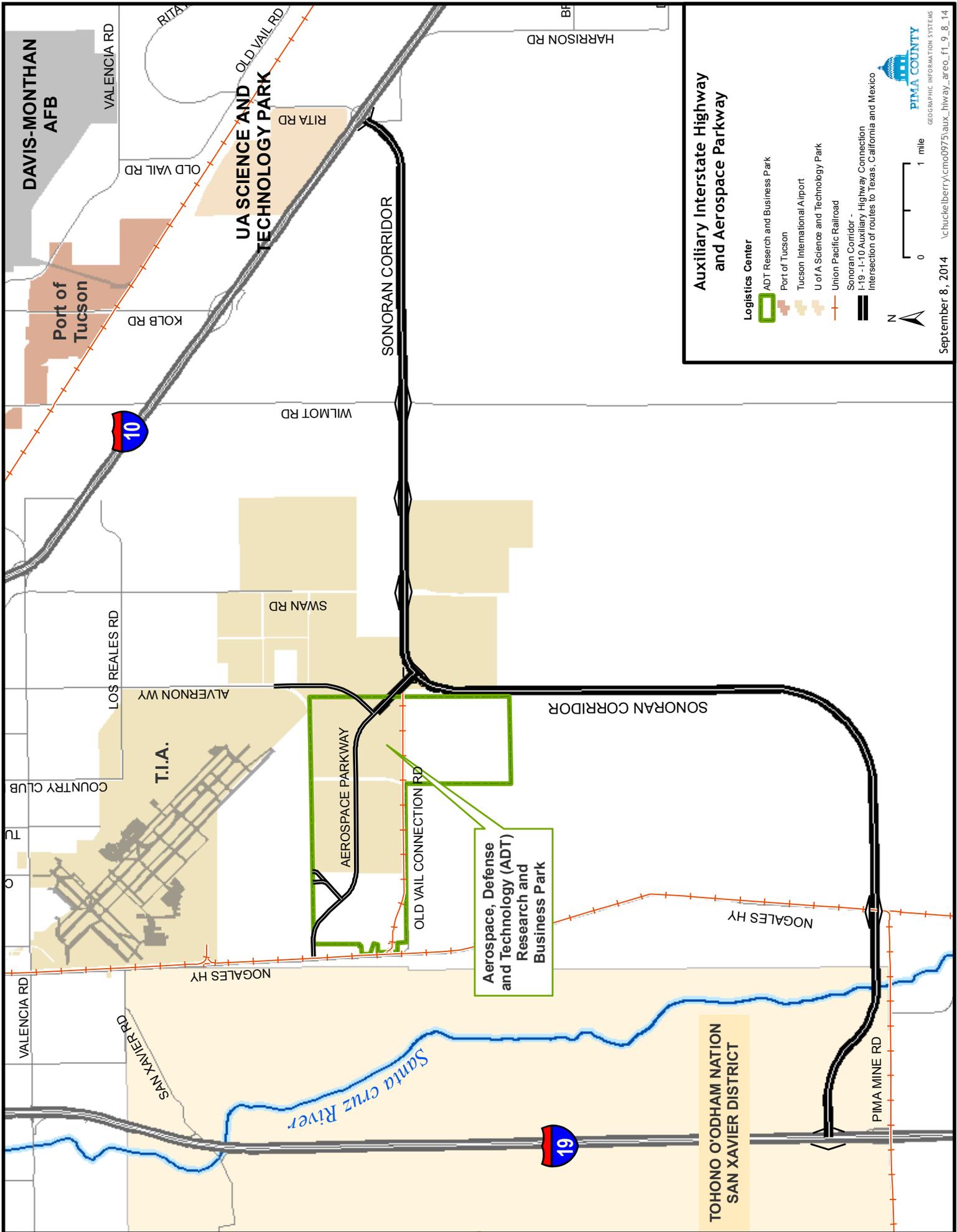


C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/mjk – September 9, 2014
Attachments

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Dr. John Moffatt, Director, Office of Strategic Planning
Priscilla Cornelio, Transportation Director

FIGURE 1



Auxiliary Interstate Highway and Aerospace Parkway and Aerospace Parkway

Logistics Center

- ADT Research and Business Park
- Port of Tucson
- Tucson International Airport
- U of A Science and Technology Park
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Sonoran Corridor - I-19 - I-10 Auxiliary Highway Connection
- Intersection of routes to Texas, California and Mexico

0 1 mile

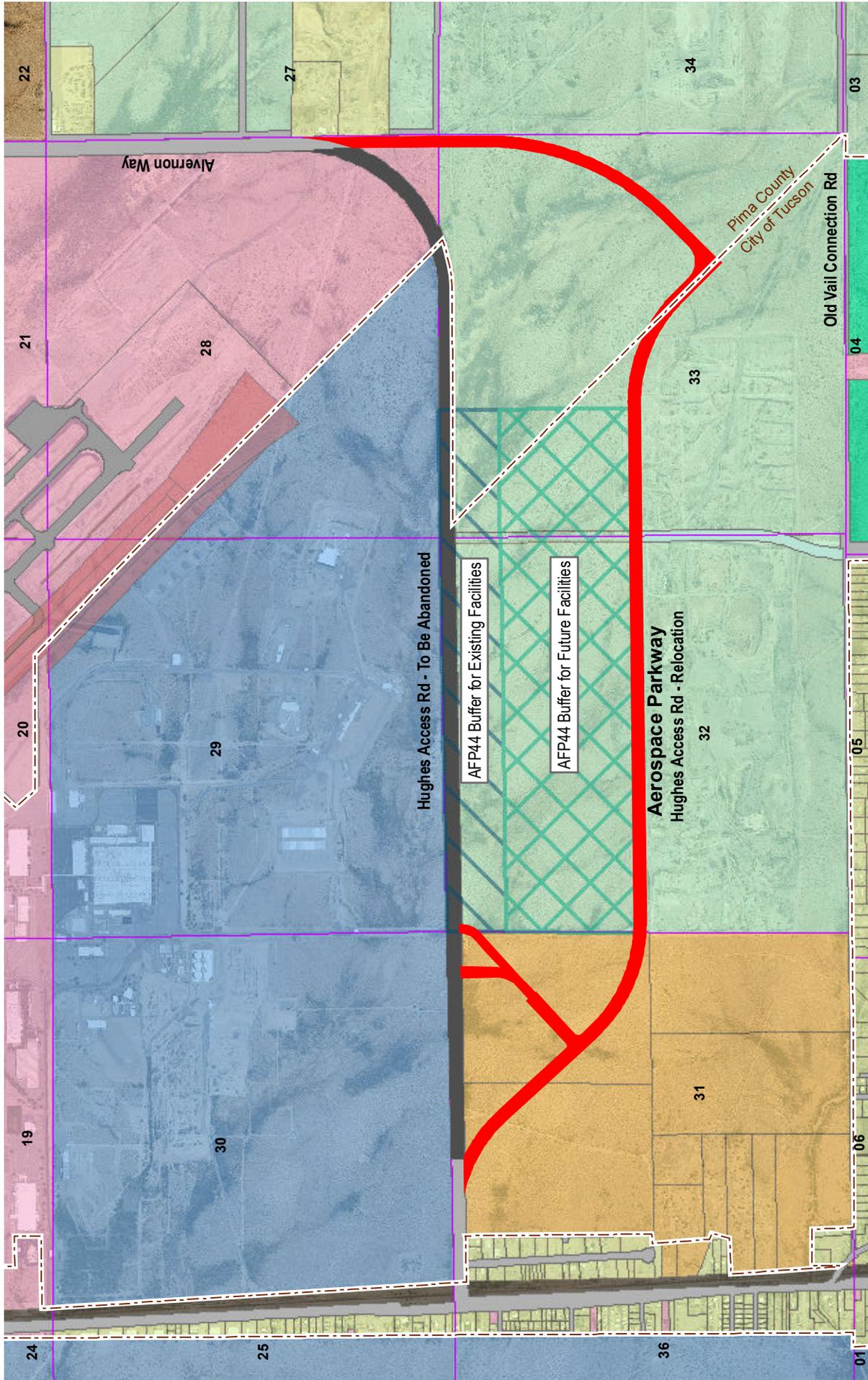
September 8, 2014

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Aerospace, Defense and Technology (ADT) Research and Business Park

TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION
SAN XAVIER DISTRICT



Hughes Access Road Relocation

- Proposed Hughes Realignment
- Future TAA Runway Requirements
- AFP44 Buffer for Existing Facilities
- AFP44 Buffer for Future Facilities
- Hughes Access Rd to be Abandoned
- Existing Taxiways and Runways
- Township/Range/Section Line

- City of Tucson
- Pima County
- State of Arizona
- United States of America

- Private
- Tucson Airport Authority INC
- Union Pacific Railroad



FIGURE 4

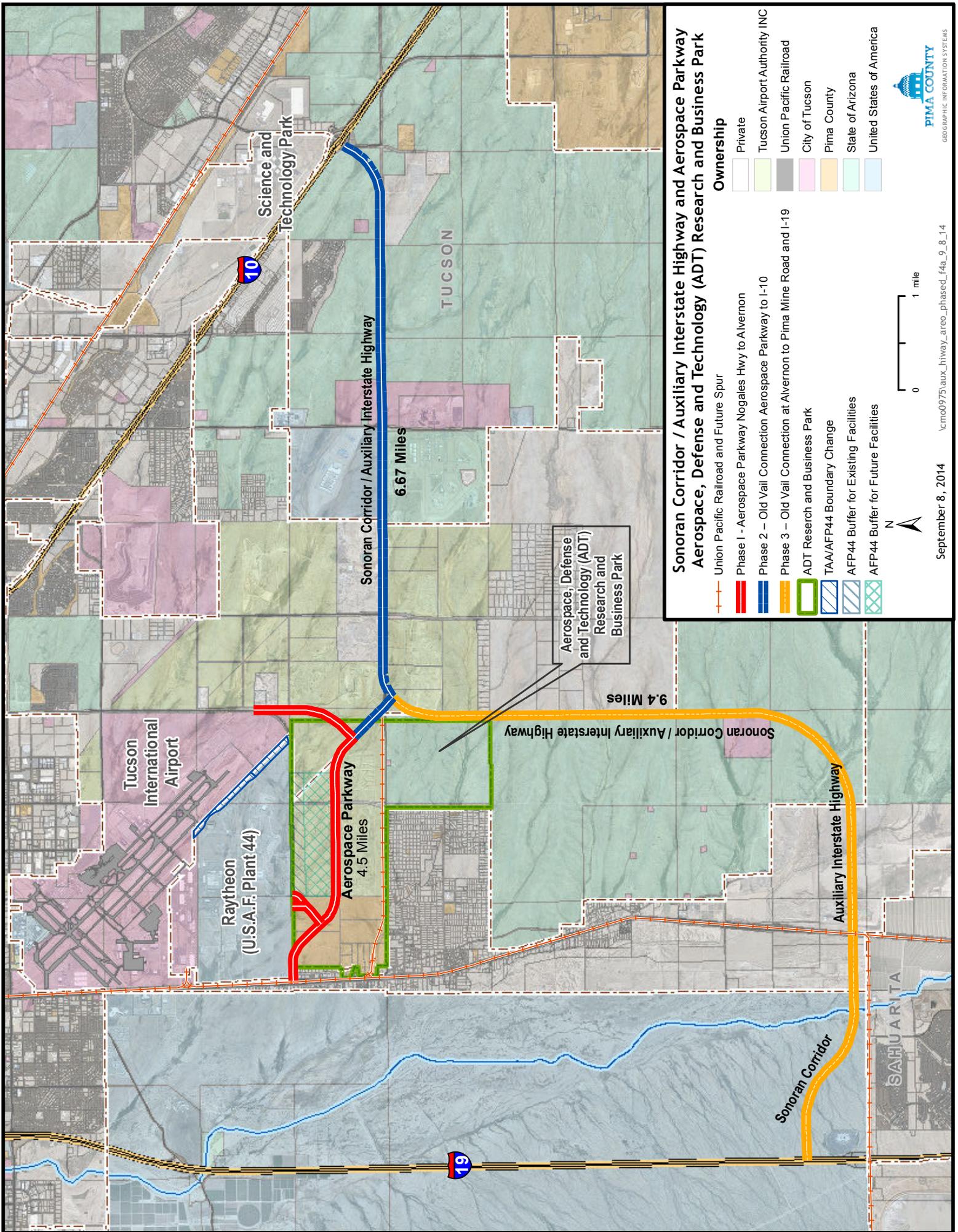
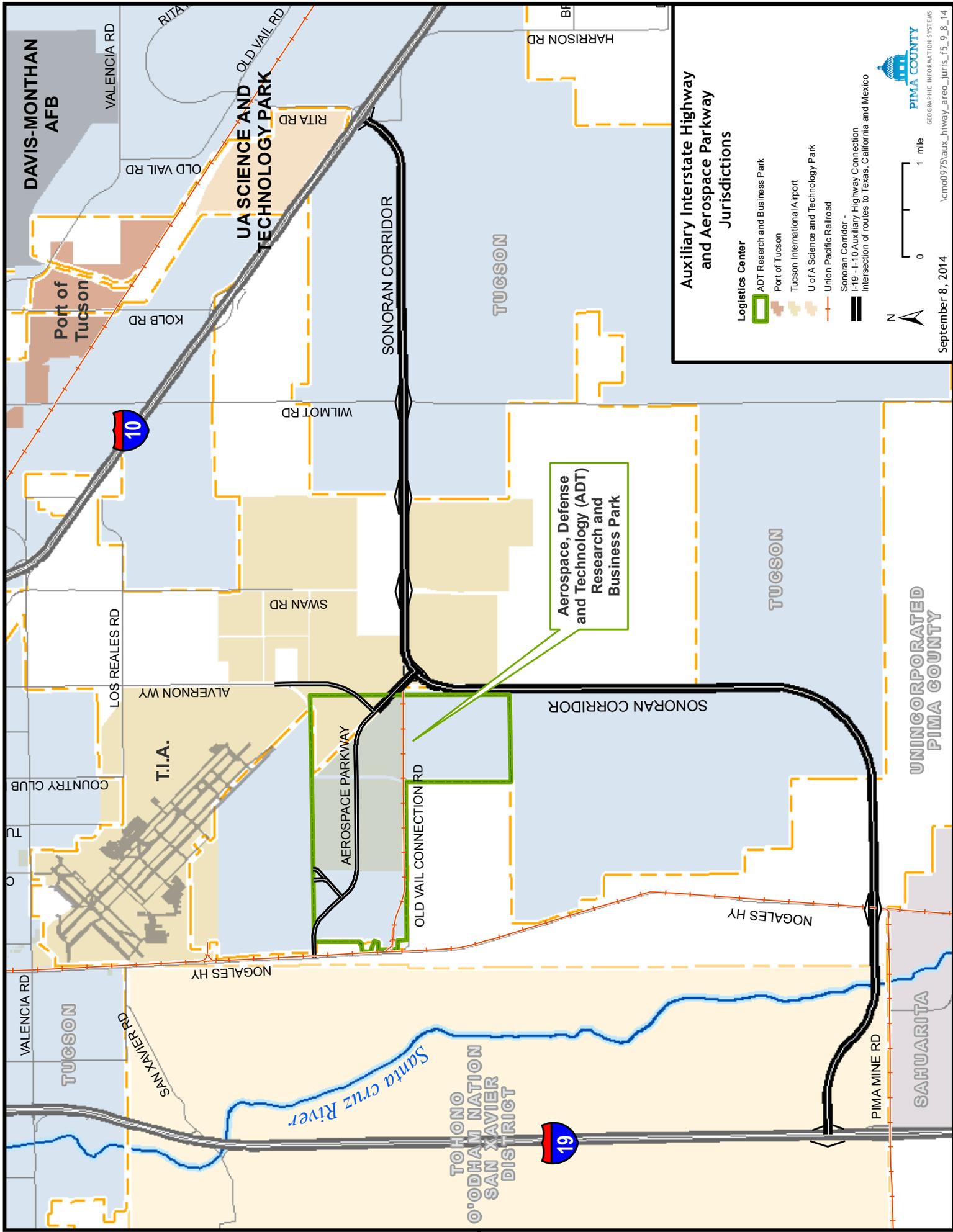


FIGURE 5



Auxiliary Interstate Highway and Aerospace Parkway Jurisdictions

Logistics Center

- ADT Research and Business Park
- Port of Tucson
- Tucson International Airport
- U of A Science and Technology Park
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Scale: 0 to 1 mile

September 8, 2014

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