



CITY OF FLAGSTAFF

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Main Line: 928-213-2000

Website: <https://www.flagstaff.az.gov>

July 19, 2024

Mr. Shailen Bhatt
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bhatt:

The City of Flagstaff supports the application of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP). ADOT is requesting approximately \$25 million in WCPP funding to complete the final design and construction of the proposed Kachina Village Overpass Project along Interstate-17 (I-17) south of the city of Flagstaff. The wildlife crossing will be used by elk and other species that cross the highway, as well as nearly 13 miles of fencing, cattle guards, and concrete escape ramps.

Wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVCs) account for the highest percentage of all crash causes (>20%) on the Project stretch, with some one-mile segments exceeding 30%, which surpasses the 4.6% National average for WVCs on rural highways. The construction of a wildlife crossing and fencing along the corridor will reduce the number of WVCs while enhancing habitat connectivity that is currently limited by the highway's barrier effect on wildlife movement. ADOT's previous experience with grade-separated wildlife crossings has demonstrated that these projects are effective in reducing WVCs by 90-100% as well as promoting permeability across the highway. This project is adjacent to and complements the recently awarded FHWA 2023 WCPP Willard Springs Overpass Project.

ADOT will use the requested funds, if awarded, to finalize the design and to construct a wildlife overpass with fencing that is expected to reduce collisions between wildlife and vehicles and reduce the highway barrier effect, in an area of critical need along I-17, one of Arizona's major connecting corridors. This project will promote motorist safety from reduced WVCs and increased habitat connectivity along the I-17. We support this project and believe it will help protect and keep both travelers and wildlife safe.

The City of Flagstaff would like to thank FHWA for considering this project.

Sincerely,

Becky Daggett,
Mayor of Flagstaff, on behalf of the Flagstaff City Council