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Growth projections spur MAG transportation study for Hassayampa Valley

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The interchange requests for Interstate 10 piled up.

That's when federal and state officials approached the Maricopa Association of Governments. They wanted to know exactly what was planned west of the White Tank Mountains.

The area, dubbed the Hassayampa Valley, could have more than 100 master-planned communities and almost 1 million residents by 2030 and nearly 3 million at build-out.

MAG is conducting a transportation study to determine a plan for the Hassayampa Valley, which includes most of Buckeye's planning area.

"The last time this was done in the Phoenix metropolitan area was in about 1960," said Bob Hazlett, a senior engineer with MAG. "Folks took a look at build-out projections and that became the genesis of the regional freeway system we see today."

It could take \$20 billion to establish freeways, parkways and maybe even a tunnel through a section of the White Tank Mountains. If population projections hold true and MAG's plan moves forward, there may be freeways named after the Hassayampa River and the White Tank Mountains. The back road known as Maricopa County 85, a stretch of sometimes-dusty pavement locals use to avoid traffic on Interstate 10, also may become a freeway.

"We are trying to take the same perspective and say what type of development will be out here and what do we need for transportation," Hazlett said.