

Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

June 9, 2021 ♦ Telephonic Conference

MEMBER NAME	ENTITY	PRESENT	ABSENT	STAFF NAME	
Fern Benally	Navajo County	X		Chris Fetzer	
Brady Harris	Town of Tusayan	X		Jennifer O'Connor	
Michael Lomayaktewa	Hopi Tribe		X	Mandia Gonzales	
Mary Mallory	Yavapai County	X		Tod Morris	
Bill Regner	Town of Clarkdale	X		Cindy Binkley	
Matt Ryan	Coconino County	X			
Jerry Smith	Town of Pinetop-Lakeside		X		
Alton Shepherd	Apache County		X	GUEST/ALTERNATE NAME	ENTITY
				Kevin Adam	RTAC

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Matt Ryan called the meeting to order at 1:05 P.M. Self-introductions were made. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes – April 14, 2021

Chairman Ryan asked for any additions or corrections to the April 14 meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

Mary Mallory moved to approve the April 14, 2021 meeting minutes, seconded by Brady Harris. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Legislative Update

Kevin Adam provided a legislative update.

State Update

Arizona Lawmakers are currently at an impasse with regard to the state budget, which is the final item for the legislative session. Leadership and the Governor had reached an agreement, but fell short of passage. The package of tax cuts, which will phase down to a 2% flat individual income tax is a sticking point due to the potential impact of revenue losses on municipalities from the state shared revenue. So far, efforts to reach a compromise to mitigate that impact have not been sufficient to get enough votes for approval. Another amendment is being considered to pare down some of the proposed spending, including some of the transportation funding. As the budget currently stands, lawmakers will have to negotiate further to get adequate votes.

Federal Update

There are two ongoing processes at the federal level regarding transportation:

1. Authorization of a new federal surface transportation bill, which provides the ongoing funding that is distributed to the state DOTs (Invest in America Act).
2. Negotiation of a separate infrastructure package, which would provide one-time funding (American Jobs Plan).

The Senate Infrastructure/Public Works Committee has proposed a 34% increase over current funding levels, to be distributed by formula. The proposal has bipartisan support on the committee. The House Transportation and infrastructure committee is proposing a 50% increase to highway and transit. The two chambers will have to reconcile their individual versions for passage. There is a good chance that reauthorization will be done before the FAST Act expires, and there is potential for permanent funding increases.

The American Jobs Plan is the Administration's \$2.3 trillion proposal for infrastructure. The ranking members of the House and Senate committees have put together a coalition to develop a counter proposal, which is currently at \$585 billion. Negotiations are ongoing, but major differences remain on what pieces be prioritized. While the two sides are moving closer together, there is no requirement for this bill to pass.

Kevin Adam answered questions from the TPAC members.

IV. Priority Project List Development

NACOG staff is working with local jurisdictions to develop a list of projects to present to the RTAC, who will put together a statewide list of priority projects. This list would be used to propose projects to the State Legislature during the next session. Projects on the list could also be proposed for federal funding opportunities. The statewide list will include approximately \$50 million in projects. The NACOG region's portion would be \$9.286 million.

A call for potential projects was released by staff in early May. Projects will be divided into two categories:

- High priority projects – fiscally constrained, could be implemented in the near future
- Regionally significant projects – longer list, not fiscally constrained, longer timeline acceptable

A series of sub-regional meetings were held 5/17-18. During these meetings, staff answered questions about the process. Applications are due June 11 at 5PM. More information is posted on NACOG website, including a link to the online application.

Sub-regional prioritization will take place during the first 2 weeks of July. The draft region-wide list is scheduled for completion on 7/26. It will be presented to the Technical Subcommittee for approval on 8/4, and to the Regional Council for adoption on 8/26.

Jennifer O'Connor answered questions from the TPAC members.

V. Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (IPTA) Legislation

An intergovernmental public transportation authority (IPTA) is made up of cities, towns and colleges. It has the power to operate or contract for public transit services. It has no taxing authority.

The recommendation to form an IPTA in Yavapai County came out of the recently completed Yavapai Passenger Transportation Study (YPTS). In Yavapai County, there are multiple small-to-mid size transit providers. An IPTA would allow for coordinated governance and operations.

Current Arizona statute restricts the formation of IPTAs to counties with populations of 200,000 or less. The current population of Yavapai County is 235,099. NACOG staff, in coordination with its partners, would like to develop legislation removing the population cap.

The benefits of an IPTA are: ease of coordination among multiple partners, as well as ease of formation. Local cities/towns would serve as partner agencies, bringing opportunities for generating revenue. As its own government entity, an IPTA has the autonomy to allow for a focused approach to transit outside of city/county governments.

The members of the TPAC expressed support to move forward with legislation to remove the population cap.

The next steps in the process will be to communicate with partners, which include local transit providers, and the Arizona Transit Association (AzTA) to make sure they are still interested in this opportunity. NACOG staff would enlist guidance/support from AzTA in the drafting of this legislation for the 2022 legislative session.

Kevin Adam commented that this legislation would be in line with goals of the Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC), who could potentially consider adopting resolution of support. He added that other regions in the state might want to get on board and be a part of the legislation to benefit their areas.

Staff will reach out to CYMPO and let them know what we plan to propose.

Bill Regner moved to support the modification of the state statute (ARS 28-9101-28-9143) to allow the formation of an Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (IPTA) in counties with populations over 200,000, seconded by Mary Mallory. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Next Meeting: August 11, 2021 – 1:00-2:30 PM

Mary Mallory reported that the Amtrak Chief, which runs from Los Angeles to Chicago is Amtrak's oldest running train. It dates back to the early 1970s. Supervisor Mallory would like to propose using available funding to renovate the Chief and bring it up to current standards. She asked if there is an opportunity for the region to advocate for this project. Matt Ryan added that the project might potentially be eligible for American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding. He suggested bringing the item back to a future meeting for

discussion about putting together a coalition of support. Bill Regner expressed interest, and asked Supervisor Mallory to provide some draft details of the proposal.

Committee members that do not currently receive Kevin's RTAC email updates should contact Cindy Binkley to be added to the distribution list.

The next TPAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for 1-2:30PM on Wednesday, 8/11. Staff will send an outlook invitation to determine if there will be a quorum.

VII. Adjourn

Chairman Ryan asked for any final questions or comments. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting.

Chairman Matt Ryan adjourned the June 9, 2021 meeting of the NACOG Transportation Policy Advisory Committee at 2:05 P.M.