

# Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

March 10, 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
				Cynthia Gentle	Yavapai County

## I. Call to Order and Introductions

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

## II. Approval of Minutes – February 10, 2021

Vice Chairman Ryan asked for any corrections to the February meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve.

*Jerry Smith moved to approve the February 10, 2021 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Bill Regner. Motion passed unanimously.*

## III. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Vice Chairman Ryan asked for nominations for TPAC Chair and Vice Chair.

*Mary Mallory nominated Matt Ryan for TPAC Chair, seconded by Brady Harris. Motion passed, with Matt Ryan abstaining.*

*Bill Regner nominated Mary Mallory to serve as TPAC Vice Chair, seconded by Brady Harris. Motion passed unanimously.*

## IV. Legislative Update

Kevin Adam provided a legislative update.

## **Federal Update**

Congress has passed the next round of COVID relief. President Biden is expected to sign the bill into law on Friday. The COVID package includes \$30 billion for transit providers and \$10 billion for airlines/airports. There was no additional funding allocated for highways and roads.

The next item on the congressional agenda is reauthorization of the FAST Act.

If trends hold, the US government will transition from COVID relief to economic recovery. As a part of that recovery, it is anticipated that there might be a substantial investment measure for infrastructure. Transportation funding is currently operating on 1-year extension of the FAST Act.

Authorization for the surface transportation funding typically occurs in 5 year increments. For the next authorization bill, we will be looking to reform, as well as reauthorize the federal programs, which could also involve additional investment levels. Over the past decade there has been bipartisan support for increasing investment levels, however there has not been consensus on how to pay for increased investment.

## **State Update**

The State House and Senate have finished their first round of committee hearings. This has eliminated approximately half of the bills that had been introduced at the beginning of the session. There was initially a wide array of bills that would have increased revenue for transportation. However, there is the only bill with transportation funding that is still active. SB 1108 is a tax omnibus bill, which includes a provision to establish fees for alternative fuel vehicles to compensate for those vehicles not generating revenue through the fuel tax. The fee levels are lower than what we have pursued in other legislation, but will still add revenue.

The greatest impact on state transportation funding this year will potentially be one-time funding. State revenue collections have continued to exceed forecasts from the beginning of the pandemic. Arizona is on trend to finish the fiscal year with a \$2 billion surplus. Leadership has indicated that \$200 million in one-time funding will be set aside for infrastructure projects, which will likely be allocated through legislative earmarks. There have been 31 bills introduced that would direct one-time funding to specific projects, totaling approximately \$295 million. Half of those bills have moved through the committee process.

The Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC) is working with staff from the rural COGs/MPOs to develop list of priority projects for greater Arizona to recommend to the legislature for funding. Presenting funding priorities in partnership with the other rural COGs and MPOs, as a statewide coalition, will potentially provide our projects with a better chance of being funded.

## **V. Transportation Planning Program Reports**

### **Roadway/Infrastructure**

Mandia Gonzales reported that in December, NACOG staff began working with the Technical Subcommittee (TSC) to begin programming the NACOG Transportation Investment Program (TIP) for FYs22-26. In April, the draft TIP will be approved by the TSC for public comment. The public comment period will be open for 45 days, starting April 8.

Project consultants have begun work on Phase 1 of the Regional Traffic Count Program. A list of project phases and count locations is included with today's meeting materials. Phase 1 includes 368 count locations. Count data for Phase 1 should be available to NACOG and the local communities in the fall. Prioritization for Phase 2 will begin later this year.

### **Mobility and Transit**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 grant program application cycle is currently open. Applications are due on 3/18. The Section 5310 program provides funding to support transit service that enhances mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Section 5310 operates on a 2-year funding cycle, which aligns with the federal fiscal year. The program provides approximately \$2.1 million to rural areas statewide.

There were additional funds provided in the COVID-19 relief package approved in December. There was approximately \$145,000 provided for Arizona's rural areas and \$202,000 provided for small urban areas. These funds are to be used for pandemic-related expenses.

NACOG's planning division has been working with the Area Agency on Aging to provide older adults with access to the COVID-19 vaccines. Verde Valley Caregivers is currently registering its clients for the COVID vaccine, and other older adults in the community who need assistance and transportation to vaccination locations.

## **VI. Next Meeting: April 14, 2021 – 1:00 PM**

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, 4/14. Staff will send an outlook invitation to determine if there will be a quorum.

## **VII. Adjourn**

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

***Vice Chairman Matt Ryan adjourned the March 10, 2021 meeting of the NACOG Transportation Policy Advisory Committee at 2:05 P.M.***