

San Carlos Apache Tribe / White Mountain Apache Tribe Transportation Partnership Annual Meeting Summary

WEDNESDAY, August 8, 2018

9 a.m.– 2:30 p.m.; Apache Gold Casino and Conference Center

MEETING PURPOSE:

Steering Committee to Present Successes, Challenges, Information to Our Partner Leaders and Receive Feedback and Direction

ATTENDEES

Angelo Belvado, San Carlos Nnee Bich’o Nii Transit Dispatcher
Bill Harmon, ADOT Southeast District Engineer
Bernadette Goode, SCAT Councilwoman
Bernadette Kniffin, San Carlos Nnee Bich’o Nii Apache Transit
Brannen Parriel, WMAT Office of Vice Chairman Legislative Assistant
Cassie Kenton-Garcia, WMAT Transit Manager
Charla Glendening, ADOT Statewide Planning Manager
Charles Russell, SCAT DOT Deputy Director of Transportation
David Francis, San Carlos Nnee Bich’o Nii Apache Transit Services
David Thompson, SCAT DOT Construction Representative
Debbie Paxson, WMAT Tribal Chairwoman Executive Assistant
Elizabeth Vargas, ADOT ROW Project Coordinator/Tribal Liaison
Ermalinda Gene, ADOT Tribal Planning Program Manager
Everette Massey, WMAT Council Member, District IV
Gwendena Lee-Gatewood, WMAT Chairwoman
Hugh Moses, SCAT DOT Financial and Budget Analyst
Jason Bottjen, ADOT Multimodal Planning Division
Jeffrey Kenton, SCAT DOT Laborer
Jennifer O’Conner, Northern AZ Council of Governments Mobility Planner
Jerold Altaha, WMAT Council Member District II
Jerome Kasey III, WMAT Vice-Chairman
Jerry McCoy, ADOT Northeast District Community Relations Project Manager
Jeremiah Moerke, ADOT Southeast District Community Relations Project Manager
Jesse Gutierrez, ADOT Deputy State Engineer/Statewide Operations
John Osgood, Navajo County Public Works Director
Julia Voight, ADOT Partnering Facilitator
Kathy Borquez, Pinal County Public Works Transportation Planner
Kimberly Utley, FHWA Area Engineer
Kyia Jackson, SCAT Office of the General Manager Economic Development Specialist
Matt Moul, ADOT Northeast District Engineer
Marvin Mull Jr., SCAT DOT Director
Mary Tapija, SCAT DOT Tribal Transportation Secretary
Michael Carter, ADOT Partnering Office Administrator
Miles Begay, Navajo County Tribal Transportation Manager
Ned Anderson, SCAT Tribal Council Member – Bylas District
Perry Aubree, ADOT 5311 Program Manager
Renaldo Dazen, WMAT Council Member District II

Rick Powers, Jacobs Engineering Consultant
Romare Truely, FHWA Community Planner
Shawn McDougal, ADOT Field Reports
Simon Hooke, SCAT Transportation Board Chairman
Schroeder Griggs, WMAT Office of Vice Chairman Executive Assistant
Stephanie Titla, SCAT General Manager Office Planner
Steve Aday, BIA San Carlos Agency Roads Supervisor
Steve York, Southwest Gas District Manager
Tara Chief, WMAT Division of Transportation Director
Travis Ashbaugh, CAG Transportation Planning Manager
Travis Tessay, WMAT Council Member District I

MEETING OPENING

ADOT Partnering Facilitator, Linda Ritter, opened the meeting.

OPENING PRAYER

San Carlos Nnee Bich'o Nii Apache Transit Director, Bernadette Kniffin, provided the meeting's opening prayer.

WELCOME

SCAT DOT Director, Marvin Mull Jr., provided a welcoming address, expressing his appreciation to the attendees for taking time out of their schedules to attend the meeting and collaborate on transportation issues.

WMAT Chairwoman, Gwendena Lee-Gatewood, provided a welcoming address, expressing WMAT's interest in the Partnership and emphasizing the importance of working together to address transportation issues.

ADOT Southeast District Engineer, Bill Harmon, provided a welcoming address, thanking attendees for taking the opportunity to participate in today's discussions that will serve to address the many transportation needs in the region. Discussion will lead to action.

INTRODUCTIONS

Linda went over the meeting's agenda and asked attendees to introduce themselves, stating their names and the agencies/tribes they serve.

PARTNERSHIP CHARTER

Through a PowerPoint display, Linda presented the new logo which was created through input from the Steering Committee. The logo serves to represent the WMAT mountain environment and the SCAT desert environment with a roadway running through the logo's center, symbolizing transportation. A roadrunner is located along the roadway, symbolizing transit.

A printed Partnership Charter was placed at the front of the meeting room and all in attendance were invited to sign the Charter, which is dated August 8, 2018.



August 8, 2018

Charter

Provide a forum for partnership members to strengthen working relationships, identify transportation concerns and work collaboratively to address those concerns.

Partnership Guiding Principles

- Be patient
- Seek to understand
- Cooperate and collaborate to achieve goals
- Provide timely feedback
- Make timely decisions
- Attend meetings and participate in discussions
- Be open and honest
- Work to develop trust and respect
- Be committed to the partnership and members
- Disseminate accurate information
- Use agreed-upon processes to resolve issues
- Listen to understand

MAJOR SUCCESS STORIES/ACHIEVEMENTS

A panel consisting of seven agencies presented major successes achieved through the partnership. Each panel member spoke briefly, highlighting some of the major successes achieved.

- San Carlos Apache DOT --Marvin Mull, Jr.
Millions in projects have been accomplished. Included among the outlined project achievements is the Route 6 project, with the construction of three lanes, including a center turn lane and sidewalk. The Bylas Safety Improvements project is underway. The US 70 passing lane project is underway. More improvement projects are greatly needed in the region.
- NE ADOT District --Matt Moul
Direct work with White Mountain DOT has accomplished many transportation improvement projects. Among the many projects discussed included the SR 73 pavement preservation project, two pedestrian crossing projects on the White Mountain Apache Tribal lands.
- SE ADOT District --Bill Harmon
The projects that are being discussed would not be possible without the partnership working together to find ways to fund improvement projects. Projects that promote safety, mobility and improve access are our common vision.
- White Mountain Apache Transportation Division --Tara Chief
In June 2017, Fort Apache Connection Transit was up and running, covering more than 75 miles from the west end to the northern end of the reservation. Thank you to Bernadette Kniffin for her mentorship/assisting with this transit goal. This past June, Fort Apache Connection transit and Nnee Bich'o Nii Apache transit connected at the bottom of the Salt River. Work with other partners has helped to plan for and achieve many transportation improvement projects.
- San Carlos Nnee Bich'o Nii Apache Transit --Bernadette Kniffin
Transit highlights include what Tara mentioned - Fort Apache Connection transit and Nnee Bich'o Nii Apache transit connected at the bottom of Salt River this summer. A big accomplishment! The focus is on serving the community through various continuous improvements - working on communication lines, making the routes larger, connections better and effective, serving the disabled. Our partners who help to secure funding are critical to success.
- Pinal County --Kathy Borquez
Pinal County is focused on safety planning, prioritizing areas where improvements are most needed and working with partners to implement these transportation improvements. The Apache Sky project is an example of a major partnering accomplishment through our work with SCAT DOT.
- CAG --Travis Ashbaugh
With limited funding availability, it is important to work together. CAG has been serving to advocate for, provide technical assistance and determine avenues that help both SCAT and WMAT meet transportation/transit funding needs. Among partnering achievements outlined, the Greater Gila County Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study, which serves to understand the transit needs of both tribes. This study plays a significant role in providing for interconnectivity in the region.

HOW FUNDING WORKS - MAJOR CHALLENGES

- A panel consisting of the Federal Highway Administration (Romare Truly), SCAT DOT (Marvin Mull Jr.), WMAT Transportation Division (Tara Chief), San Carlos Nnee Bich'oo Nii Apache Transit (Bernadette Kniffin), CAG Transportation Planning (Travis Ashbaugh) and ADOT (Charla Glendening) addressed how funding works and the challenges faced in having many transportation needs, but severely limited funds.
- Romare Truly with FHWA opened the discussion by presenting a funding allocation diagram and discussing key points of how funding works through FHWA.
 - Tribes receive funds directly through FHWA Tribal Transportation Program Agreements. These limited dollars are secured through the Federal Lands Highway Tribal Transportation Program.
 - The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Division of Transportation also receives funds through the Federal Lands Highway Tribal Transportation Program.
 - NACOG, CAG and SEAGO receive funding through the state (ADOT). ADOT receives these limited dollars through the Federal-Aid Highway Program.
- SCAT DOT, WMAT Transportation Division, and San Carlos Nnee Bich'oo Nii Apache Transit described how improvement project funding is critical to each agency's ability to address the lengthy list of transportation needs in their communities. There is simply not enough funding for all the needs. Prioritizing needs is essential.
- CAG works directly with the tribes to assist in their planning/funding needs. These partners face tough choices with the limited transportation dollars. Data-driven information is an important component in prioritizing needs and securing funding.
- Charla Glendening with ADOT described ADOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan for the years 2016 through 2040. Attendees were provided with a booklet describing the plan. This booklet is available through ADOT's Planning Division. The plan is called "What Moves You Arizona," and it establishes guidance on how ADOT will allocate future transportation funding among preservation (maintaining the existing roads and bridges), modernization (improving safety and using technology advances) and expansion (building new roads and adding lanes). Preservation and modernization are the focus of the plan.

The purpose of the plan is to provide information and direction to ADOT, agencies such as SCAT DOT, WMAT transportation Division, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Councils of Government, such as CAG, and other partners about transportation needs, available dollars and priorities. It serves as a transportation planning blueprint.

INFORMATIONAL BREAKOUT STATIONS

Next on the morning agenda, attendees visited informational stations set up in a separate room and staffed by members of the agencies. Attendees were able to ask questions in a one-on-one atmosphere and review the information at the station. Stations included:

- White Mountain Apache Transportation Division
- San Carlos Apache DOT
- San Carlos Nnee Bich'oo Nii Apache Transit (included a PowerPoint presentation)

- Southeast ADOT District (included a PowerPoint presentation)
- Pinal County

Q & A AND FEEDBACK

Prior to lunch, after visiting the stations, attendees asked questions and provided commentary/discussion in preparation for the post-lunch Action Item planning session. There were many discussion points centered on the many needs in the region, the difficulty of funding and the importance of partnering. It was emphasized that accurate crash data reporting will be important for the tribes in securing funding for safety improvement projects.

PARTNERING SPIRIT AWARD

ADOT Partnering Administrator, Mike Carter, presented Bernadette Kniffin and Tara Chief with ADOT's Partnering Spirit award:

"When Tara Chief of the White Mountain Apache Tribe's Division of Transportation came on board in March 2016 to lead its new Division as Director, the urgent mission to establish public transit service in the White Mountain Apache tribal community was put into motion. Public transit is a service greatly needed by the tribe, and coming on board as the Transportation Division's only employee initially and establishing a transit system in a short period of time takes an incredible amount of effort and talent. In June 2017, Fort Apache Connection Transit was up and running. The Fort Apache Connection public transit system provides public transportation on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation covering over 75 miles from the west end to the northern end of the reservation.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe established Nnee Bich'oo Nii Apache Transit in 2008. The Apache words "Nnee Bich'oo Nii" means "helping the people." Since 2008, Bernadette Kniffin, originator and director of the transit services, has been successfully leading the effort to effectively provide and expand public transit for the San Carlos Apache Tribe. Bernadette's unique experience in developing and continually improving upon the transit system is unparalleled, and she was pleased to assist Tara with her valuable experience as Tara worked to build the new transit system. With Tara's focused commitment to establishing a transit system and Bernadette's knowledge and enthusiasm for helping the people through transit, these two talented leaders formed a valuable partnership.

Tara and Bernadette have successfully led efforts to provide exemplary community service by improving the quality of life in their tribal communities. Their ongoing partnership has helped them to achieve an especially valuable success this summer. -This past June, Fort Apache Connection transit and Nnee Bich'oo Nii Apache transit connected at the bottom of Salt River. Starting June 1 and running through November 12, the connecting route bridges the 183 mile gap along US 60 between the San Carlos Apache Tribe and the White Mountain Apache Tribe. What an enormous achievement! Bernadette Kniffin and Tara Chief represent the true spirit of Partnering!"

ACTION PLAN

Possible goals for the Steering Committee to achieve in the year or years ahead, the person in charge of reaching each goal and the timeline for achieving the goal were discussed and are outlined below. The Action Plan will need further discussion and prioritizing at the next Steering Committee meeting. As discussed and agreed upon in previous Steering Committee meetings, the goals will be SMART:

- **Specific**
- **Measureable**
- **Attainable**
- **Results-oriented**
- **Time-oriented**

GOALS

1. Develop a “Law and Order” Committee, which will oversee a plan to have inmates routinely clean/clear along roadways. Bill Harmon will be in charge of achieving this goal of committee development. The timeline for achieving the goal is September 2018.
2. Improve telecommunications in the Salt River region.
 - WMAT has Cellular One Service. Verizon has poor connectivity in Whiteriver. Investigate Cellular One connectivity with Verizon. WMAT Councilman Jerold Altaha will be in charge of this goal. The timeline is one year.
 - Implement an emergency landline that extends to Salt River by working with the SCAT local phone company. Possibly install an emergency phone in the Salt River rest area. Bill Harmon is in charge of this goal. The timeline is one year.
 - Implement fiber connectivity from San Carlos to Whiteriver. Bill Harmon is in charge of this goal. The timeline is one year.
3. The San Carlos Nnee Bich’o Nii Apache transit needs assistance in having a CDL (Commercial Driver License) program. FHWA believes that funding may be available if a feasibility study could be reported in one year. Ermalinda Gene will be in charge of this goal. The timeline has a start date of spring 2019.
4. Amos Wash Road needs improving. Improvements would serve to reduce commute time between Whiteriver and San Carlos, and could possibly improve the economy, as well as serve as an emergency route. A working lead has not yet been identified.
5. Charla Glendening requested one tribe to participate in installing TraCs software in patrol cars. This software serves to improve crash data reporting, which is essential to securing funding for transportation improvements where safety is at stake. It is understood that there is sensitivity in installing this software, as personal information would be acquired. ADOT is committed to ensuring full redaction of all personal information. Charla and Tim Jordan will be in charge of this goal. (The timeline has not yet been determined.)
6. Lighting is needed in front of Apache Gold Casino and Conference Center. Marvin Mull and Bill Harmon will be in charge of this goal. The timeline for reaching the goal is 2020.
7. Highway 70 is dangerous; it will take many dollars to improve the roadway. Goal: Determine the feasibility of US 70 becoming a toll road for mining and other commercial trucks. There are many reasons why US 70 is dangerous, a community-wide concern and expensive to improve:
 - There are many mine trucks carrying hazardous materials and not obeying speed limits.

- There are many unpermitted (wildcat) driveways along US 70 (many dollars needed for access roads/improvements).
- Many residents commute from Bylas to employment elsewhere.
- There is a hospital in Peridot, and the only way to get to the hospital is by US 70.

Bill Harmon will need crash data to look into the possibility of making US 70 a toll road for commercial trucks. It is requested that Chief Benally provide five years of crash data to ADOT. All personal information will need to be redacted from the crash data information. Chairman of the SCAT Transportation Board Chair, Simon Hooke, will connect with Chief Benally in the near future to see if this information can be provided, and he will report back to the committee on what he learns.

Marvin Mull and Charles Russell, Deputy Director of SCAT DOT, and Bill Harmon will be in charge of this goal. The timeline is 2020.

8. Bring the Seneca store back to operation. This could potentially be a transportation goal if transit could connect at the store. To return the store to operation, perhaps a joint partnership of the tribes can work to bring the store back, as both tribes would benefit from the enterprise.

THANK YOU AND CLOSING PRAYER

The closing prayer was led by WMAT Council Member District II, Jerold Altaha.

THE ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:30 P.M.

ACTION ITEMS

The Annual Meeting served to provide a good start for Action Planning by the Steering Committee. A date and location for the next Steering Committee will be selected, and the Committee will have further discussion regarding Action Items- adding possible additional items, determining which Action Items to prioritize, who will be responsible for the Items and the timeline for completing the Items selected. The Goals document, which the committee has been working on and updating over several years, will be updated after Action Plan agreement is reached at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Summary of Participant Meeting Evaluation

Scores are based on 23 evaluations. Comments are taken from the evaluation forms exactly as written.

1. How valuable was this meeting for you? 4.43 out of 5
2. Could you or other team members have done anything more during the meeting to encourage a successful outcome? 11 Yes 12 No
3. How well did the facilitator guide and encourage team members to understand and discuss key meeting items? 4.17 out of 5
4. How do you rate the effectiveness of the speakers? 4.34 out of 5
5. How do you rate the effectiveness of the team? 4.48 out of 5
6. Do you have any suggestions for improving future meetings? 6 Yes 17 No
7. How satisfied were you with the facility? 4.0 out of 5
8. How satisfied were you with the refreshments? 4.22 out of 5

Suggestions

- My first meeting for these departments and only know my people. Since taking notes for my boss, people on the panel needed to re-introduce themselves because I hardly know anyone.
- The meeting went well because it maintained focus on actionable items with a defined timeline. More time should be spent on delegating the prioritization of action items to the Partnership's Steering Committee. The Partnership has grown in attendance. The right stakeholders were present.
- Need a facilitator who will keep focus on topic.
- Q & A while panelists were still on stage.
- I would suggest maybe provide the previous list of goals and accomplishments as was outlined for the committee each meeting prior to the discussion of identifying new goals. That way, the elected officials could compare goals as we are coming up with next year's goals.
- Encourage more open discussions, but make the talking points more targeted so the topics don't run the gamut. It was informative, but I feel the discussion strayed from the "real" ADOT-involved projects.

Comments

- I am glad that I was able to participate in this meeting. Great job!
- Very productive meeting. Excellent job.
- Meeting was helpful to establish communication and partnerships, as well as becoming familiar with roles of those in attendance. For Southwest Gas, we appreciate the opportunity of attending.
- Was excellent meeting.
- Excellent comments/goals.
- Good meeting- very awesome.
- Very good, well run.
- Pleasure attending.