

**Navajo Nation Division of Transportation &
Arizona Department of Transportation
Partnership Steering Committee Meeting Summary**

Date: Thursday, June 15, 2023
 Time: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM (MDT)
 Location: Navajo Nation Division of Transportation
 #16 Old Coal Mine Road
 Mentmore, NM 87319

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees:

Name	Organization	Telephone	Email
Garret Silversmith	Navajo DOT	505.371.8354	gsilversmith@navajodot.org
Greg Byres	ADOT	602.712.7431	gbyres@azdot.gov
Dezbah Hatathli	ADOT	480.338.8800	dhatathli@azdot.gov
Jerry James	ADOT	602.712.7972	jjames@azdot.gov
Brad Burgess	ADOT	602.463.6551	bburgess@azdot.gov
Paula Brown	ADOT	602.712.4897	pbrown@azdot.gov
Norma Bowman	Navajo DOT	505.371.8391	nbowman@navajodot.org
Debra Planalp	ADOT	602.712.6232	dplanalp@azdot.gov
Jonah Begay	Navajo DOT	305.371.8600	jbegay@navajodot.org
Luther Lee	Office of U.S. Senator Mark Kelly	928.613.0915	Luther_lee@kelly.senate.gov
Madhav Mundle	Navajo County	602.849.3060	Madhav.mundle@navajocountyaz.gov
Jason James	ADOT	602.712.6166	james6@azdot.gov
Ed Wilson	ADOT	928.524.5432	jwilson@azdot.gov
Garret Dennison	Navajo DOT		gdennison@navajodot.org

Fern Benally	Navajo County	928.429.8655	Fern.benally@navajocountyaz.gov
Jesse Thompson	State Transportation Board	928.309.9065	jesse.thompson7@yahoo.com
Lis Vargas	ADOT Right of Way	602.712.7053	evargas@azdot.gov
Darryl Bradley	Navajo DOT	505.371.8397	dbradley@navajodot.org
LeAnne M. Roy	Navajo DOT	505.371.8380	lroy@navajodot.org
Michael Carter	ADOT	602.320.1472	mcarter@azdot.gov

Welcome:

The facilitator welcomed the group to the meeting and thanked everyone for taking time to attend and engage in the partnership. Transportation Board Member Jesse Thompson opened the meeting with a traditional Navajo prayer. Afterward, each member of the partnership introduced themselves, the organization they represent and their role in the partnership.

Navajo Nation Division of Transportation Update:

Navajo DOT Director Garret Silversmith shared with the group that Navajo DOT consists of six departments that include: Planning, Project Management, Roads Maintenance, Highway Safety, Airports Management and the most recently added, Navajo Transit System.

Mr. Silversmith added that the Navajo Nation consists of thousands of miles of road, which includes roughly 6,200 miles of Bureau of Indian Affairs roads, 180 bridges and 15 airports. Many of the roads in the Navajo Nation are still unpaved roads.

Navajo DOT is responsible for providing construction and maintenance services with funding for projects provided mainly through the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) for larger projects. An example of some of the projects includes the Pinedale project in New Mexico, along with the Birdsprings and Sweetwater projects in Arizona. There are also a number of smaller projects in the \$2k to \$10k range. Work on these projects includes chip sealing, drainage, striping, etc.

Mr. Silversmith expressed his gratitude for the partnership with ADOT-State of Arizona which helped procure 10 million for a recent project (Lupton) in addition to the 6 ½ million received for the Sweetwater project, adding that in the last several months, Navajo DOT has received nearly 17 million dollars in funding for projects in the Navajo Nation. Navajo DOT also has a partnership with other tribes and counties including Apache, Coconino and Navajo Counties and continues outreach with those partners.

State Budget Update

ADOT State Engineer Greg Byres began by explaining the structure at ADOT. The Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division (IDO), which includes the ADOT Construction Districts, is responsible for project assignment, project construction and maintenance. The two construction districts that work directly with the Navajo DOT are the Northeast and Northcentral Districts. Most communication between NDOT and ADOT occurs through these districts.

Mr. Byres added that ADOT also has an administrative side that includes the Multimodal Planning Division (MPD) and the Transportation Systems Management and Operations Division (TSMO). Examples of MPD responsibilities include:

- Completing the planning portion of projects
- Developing the Five Year Program, and
- Developing the Long Range Transportation Plan

The main objective for TSMO is to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure through implementation of system, services and projects. Examples of TSMO related work includes, among other things, anything related to Special Line Item Projects (fog coating, chip seal, etc.)

After addressing the structure at ADOT, Mr. Byres shared important budget information with the group. The current Five Year Construction Transportation Plan is set to be presented to the board. At more than 6 billion dollars over five years, it is the largest program ever at ADOT. Year one is the most important as it will also be the biggest single year program ever at ADOT. Funding is all federal dollars plus a slight increase from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIA). ADOT also received a half-billion in appropriated projects from the legislature, which matches what was received last year. The projects from last year's appropriation are either currently in construction or getting ready for construction. Mr. Byres went on to say that any earmarked projects for the state of Arizona must be administered by ADOT. Tribal projects; however, are the exception.

The state is still roughly \$8 million shy of what is needed for preservation work across the state. This shortfall only includes what is needed for preservation. With the passage of the IIA, there is a large pool of discretionary funds available and ADOT continues to go after all available funding. There are no major projects at this time, but ADOT will continue to apply.

Last winter was hard on the roadways, so ADOT adjusted \$50 million for urgent roadway repair projects, such as pothole issues (I-40, I-17, SR 260, etc.). These are urgent treatments only and not a long term fix. ADOT also received \$50 million for roadway preservation, which will begin in July, 2023. No additional funding was received for aviation.

Chief Engineer for Navajo DOT Darryl Bradley mentioned that they also deal with pothole issues and is interested in more discussion about projects categorized as urgent roadway repair projects/life extension projects. The discussion progressed into ADOT's effort to bring roadways that are currently in fair condition, to good condition. The idea behind this is to find the best application for the surface of the roadway, i.e. fog coat, chip seal, mill and fill, etc. to get the maximum amount of lane miles out of it. Mr. Bradley asked if projects listed as urgent roadway repairs are able to have funding accelerated. Funding for these projects is accelerated through ADOT's maintenance on-call contract. Special Line Item Projects are overseen by Jerry James, Assistant State Engineer, Systems Management Group. The partners agreed to continue the discussion at future meetings and life extension projects will be added as a topic on the next/future agendas.

District Update

ADOT Northeast District Engineer Ed Wilson provided an update on projects in the Northeast District.

There were 11 projects completed in FY2022 (see Figure 1 below). The projects included seven projects on SR264, with additional projects on US 160 and US 191. Most of these completed projects (8) were Special Line Item funded projects. Note: projects with borders around them are extensions from previous projects.

Route	Start MP	End MP	Name/Activity	Completed	Area Description	Funding/Comments
US 160	372.5	389.5	Longhouse Valley-Kayenta	Fall 22	Pavement Preservation	Project
SR 264	324		Moenkopi Wash Bridge	FY22	Deck Replacement	Project complete. Waiting on clearance for pipe
SR 264	465.5	471.7	Summit to New Mex Line	FY22	Life Extension ARFC replacement	Project-Covid relief
SR 264	408	418	Jeddito to County Line	FY23	TR+ Chip Seal	SLI Funded
SR 264	323.91	340.24	Tuba City-Coalmine Rd	FY 22	Fog Seal	SLI Funded
SR 264	340.24	360.78	Coalmine Rd-County Line	FY 22	Fog Seal	SLI Funded
SR 264	450	465.5	Fish Wash-Summit	FY 22	Fog Seal	SLI Funded
SR 264	390.5	402.95	Polacca Wash-Keams Canyon	FY 22	CHIP SEAL	SLI Funded
US 160	358	372.5	County Line-Black Mesa	FY 22	FOG SEAL	SLI Funded
US 191	373.96	378.65	I 40 to below	FY 22	CRACK FILL	SLI Funded
US 191	378.65	385.4	MP 385	FY 22	CRACK FILL	SLI Funded

Figure 1

There are currently eight active projects in the Northeast District (see figure 2 below). These projects are from Plan Year FY22 and FY23 and include work on US 191, I-40, SR 264, SR 87 and US 160. Please see figure 2 below for additional information:

Route	Start MP	End MP	Name	Plan Year	Work	Funding/Comments
US 191			Chinle-Lukachukai Wash Bridges		Four bridges-Working on a proposal to seal the decks and repair the asphalt transitions	Project
US 191	448	460.3	Chinle to Black Mtn. Wash	FY22	Shoulder Widening. Needs chip seal, seeding and final striping to be completed.	Project
I40	264.7	359	Hawthorn, Window Rock, St. Anselm TIs		Installing wrong way signing - delayed for archeological monitoring.	Project
SR 264	359.5	373.5	County Line to BIA 503	FY 22	Mill and Bonded Wearing Course/Paving complete. Just needs final striping	Life extension Project.
SR 87	385.05		Teesto Wash Bridge	FY23	Bridge Replacement \$8.7M/working on drilled shafts	Project

US 160	389.5	402	Kayenta to IR 59	FY23	TR+Chipseal	SLI Funded
US 160	402	416	IR59 to Dennehotso	FY23	TR+Chipseal	SLI Funded
SR 264	384	390.6	Approx. SR87 to Walpi Turn Lane	FY23	TR+ Chip Seal	SLI Funded Chip complete just needs final striping.

Figure 2

There are currently 12 projects planned for FY24 and FY25, seven of which will occur on I-40 and US 160. There are also planned projects for work on SR 87, SR 264, US 163 and US 191. Please see Figure 3 below for additional information:

Route	Start MP	End MP	Name	Plan Year	Work	Funding/Comments
SR 87	375		Coyote Wash	FY24	Bridge Replacement \$6.3M	Project
I40	318.8	330.6	Pinta to McCarrell	FY24	Pavement Preservation \$24.9M	Project
I40	316	317	Dead River Bridge	FY 24	Bridge Replacement \$3.6M	Project
I40	351		Allentown TI	FY 25	Bridge Replacement \$3.6M	Project
I40	357.53	358.53	Window Rock/Lupton TI	FY 25	Bridge Replacement \$5.5M	Project
US 160	361	NC Dist	Jct SR 98	FY 24	Flashing stop ahead lighting. \$520K	Project
US 160	416	423.9	S of Dennehotso - Linz	FY 25	Pavement Preservation \$14.4M	Project
US 160	423.9	440	Linz to 440	FY 25	Pavement Preservation \$26.4M	Project
SR 087	385	393.5	Tes Toh to Snake Butte	FY24	Fog Seal	SLI Pavement
SR 264	441	450	Burnside to Fish Wash	FY24	Fog Seal	SLI Pavement
US 163	393.52	416.71	Jct US 160 to Utah	FY24	Chip Seal, TR+	SLI Pavement
US 191	373.96	385.4	I40 to MP 385	FY24	Chip Seal, TR+	SLI Pavement

Figure 3

Long Range Transportation Plan and P2P

Regional Planning Manager and P2P Manager Jason James presented on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Planning to Programming (P2P) process at ADOT. In his presentation, Mr. James addressed the purpose of the LRTP, the vision and goals of the plan, public outreach efforts, needs analysis, revenue analysis and schedule/pending deliverables. In the P2P presentation, Mr. James discussed why P2P is important and provided an overview of the P2P process, which included a scoring overview and scoring breakdown. Please see the attachments for a copy of the presentations and for handouts that were provided for the LRTP at the meeting.

Electric Vehicles

Native Nation Ambassador for Infrastructure Development Dezbah Hatathli presented on Electric Vehicles. The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program is a \$5 billion program managed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It was developed to fund a resilient, equitable, accessible, reliable national network of Level 3 EV fast charging stations along the nation's highways. Ms. Hatathli discussed the purpose and requirements of the program. She also discussed the plan for implementation and an update of the corridors selected for charging stations. There are two upcoming meetings for those who are interested in learning more about the Electric Vehicle Program. On July 12, 2023, everyone is welcome to attend the EV Update for Key AZ Tribes meeting. Everyone is also welcome to attend the Virtual Statewide Public Meeting on July 18, 2023. Look for announcements and invites to follow. Please see the attachments for a copy of the presentation.

ADOT Broadband Program

ADOT Broadband Program Administrator Brad Burgess presented the Broadband Program updates for the group. Mr. Burgess discussed the unserved and underserved households in the state and the need for broadband to reach those that are located in areas without existing infrastructure (the gap). An update was also provided on current project related work and plans for future work. Please see the attachments for a copy of the presentation.

Discussion Items

Mr. Byres opened the discussion on turnover or turn back of roadways, explaining that the new Governor, ADOT Director and Transportation Board are all supportive of turning back or taking on roadways based on true usage (who would be the best owner of any given roadway). A question was asked about existing policy or if there was anything in place now that would help this group understand how to move forward. The current policy is extensive for turn back, so it may be necessary to change state statute to ensure equity for both/all parties. Mr. Byres said ADOT needs to formalize this a little more, but he did want to get the conversation started at this meeting. The team agreed that this would also be a good item to bring up at the [Rural Transportation Summit](#), which will take place on October 18-19 in Yuma, AZ. There is great interest from the group on this topic. Several ideas were brought up for future consideration for turn back i.e. Navajo County, BIA Routes, unpaved portion of SR 264, truck routes, etc. The following were mentioned specifically as possible early candidates for consideration:

- N41 route from Pinon to mine (north)
- Hwy 264 from Polacca to Low Mountain
- N15 from Mexican Water to UT
- SR77 to N6, connects to 264
- SR99 from I-40 towards Leupp

Closing Comments/Additional Topics

Garret Silversmith thanked everyone for attending and asked if there was a possibility of exchanging assistance with snow plow operations between the partners. In lieu of turning over routes, it would be beneficial to have snow plow assistance for some small areas. Navajo DOT would also work with ADOT to help with its snow plow operations. Mr. Byres said this may require a change in statute. This topic will be added as an agenda item for future meetings.

LeAnne Roy – It has been a long time since we met, so it's good to be back together. Ms. Roy said she liked the presentations on the LRTP and P2P and would like to hear more about these programs moving forward. Also, more ownership discussion will be good.

Norma Bowman – Thanked everyone for coming and wanted to thank Tim Jordan for his help with the TRACS software. The weigh station also really helped and Ms. Bowman would welcome additional similar efforts in the future.

Darryl Bradley – There are several new people, so it is good to be back together in person. It's good to talk through our issues and shared challenges, especially when things seem daunting with limited funds. Darryl said he is amazed at how snow plowing unfolds up this area.

Paula Brown – Thanked everyone and shared that the AZ Tribal Transportation Safety and Injury Prevention Summit is on August 9-10 in Phoenix at the Desert Willow Conference Center.

Jerry James – Trying to understand the challenges with industry and partners with regard to budgets, funding, projects, contracts and how to help the districts. Mr. James also serves as the liaison with the FHWA for emergency relief.

Greg Byres – Thanked everyone and mentioned that the key to doing what ADOT does is to understand we can do better with our outreach outside of what our confines are.

Lis Vargas – Thanked everyone.

Jonah Begay – Moving forward, planning is critical. We often look at construction, but planning needs attention during future meetings, so we can work together and develop a standard template. This will be added as an agenda item.

Luther Lee – Thanked the team for the invite. Mr. Lee said he will brief Senator Kelly and said he fields many calls from the public on tribal safety and that he also has a focus on tribal nation's safety issues.

Madhav Mundle – Thanked everyone.

Jason James – Thanked everyone and said we have so many meetings virtually now, but it is critical to have these meetings in person to have a human connection.

Jonah Begay added "real ID" as an agenda item for discussion at the next partnering meeting.

Follow Up Actions:

Action	Who	Status	Notes/Comments
Work on development of possible turn over-turn back process	Greg Byres		
Add "Turn Over/Turn Back Roads" to AZ Rural Transportation Summit Agenda	Dezbah Hatathli		
Add noted agenda items to the next partnering meeting agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn Back/Turn Over Roads;• Urgent Roadway Repair Projects/Life Extension;• Snow Plow Operations Collaboration;• Planning• Weigh Station Request• Real ID	Michael Carter		
Follow up on snow plow collaboration	Greg Byres		
Develop planning discussion speaking points/presentation for next meeting	Jonah Begay		
Follow up on the weigh station request	Michael Carter		
Follow up on Real ID	Jonah Begay		