



Arizona Department of Transportation

Multimodal Planning Division

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February 18, 2011

Jennifer Toth
Division Director

Ed Stillings, P.E.
Engineering Development Coordinator
Federal Highway Administration
4000 N. Central Avenue, Suite 1500
Phoenix, AZ 85012

RE: Review of Consultation with Rural Elected Official Policy

Dear Mr. Stillings:

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.210(b) of the Federal Register the Arizona Department of Transportation Planning Division is pleased to submit to FHWA documentation of the recent review and update to the Consultation with Rural Elected Official Policy. As you are aware, *at least once every five years (as of February 24, 2006), the State shall review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties for a period of not less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the consultation process and any proposed changes. A specific request for comments shall be directed to the State association of counties, State municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to nonmetropolitan local officials.*

BACKGROUND

On January 16, 2004, a Joint Resolution was passed and adopted by the Arizona Rural Transportation Advocacy Council and the Arizona State Transportation Board that established Arizona's Rural Consultation process. **[See Exhibit A, Resolution 04-01]**

As part of that process, federal regulations required that within two years of implementation the consultation process be reviewed for effectiveness. In 2005 ADOT Planning Division jump-started the official review process with a workshop held at the Arizona Rural Transportation Summit. The workshop offered a hands-on approach in soliciting comment on the process to date. Discussions continued during a Rural Consultation Evaluation Workshop held in November 2005.

Following the workshops, the proposed process was circulated among RTAC members for review and comment for 60 days prior to formal approval by the State Transportation Board. The Summit and Evaluation Workshop offered ADOT direction on improving the overall process and ADOT embarked on consultation sessions with non-metropolitan officials. This process has been in place for approximately 6 (six) years now, providing ADOT the opportunity to build on already strong relationships with local and regional agencies and a formal means of managing input from elected leaders.

UPDATE PROCESS

In April 2010, ADOT Planning Division embarked on the required review process of the Consultation with Rural Elected Officials Policy. This was accomplished as follows:

Subcommittee

- 1) A subcommittee was established to oversee the process and build consensus among stakeholder groups. The following members participated on the subcommittee:

Arizona Department of Transportation Staff

Don Mauller, Assistant Director of Programming, MPD

James Zumpf, Assistant Director of Planning, MPD

Dianne Kresich, Planning Program Manager, MPD

Misty Dayzie, Tribal Planner, MPD

Charla Glendening, Senior Transportation Planner, MPD

Don Cassano, Public Relations (northern area), CCP

Kathy Boyle, Public Relations (southern area), CCP

Sintra Hoffman, Public Relations (central area), CCP

Teresa Welborn, Supervisor, CCP

MPO and COG Representatives

Chris Fetzer, Northern Arizona Council of Governments

Charlene Fitzgerald, Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization

Rural Transportation Advocacy Council

Kevin Adam

The subcommittee met several times over the nine month period. The goal of the subcommittee was to develop a formal and comprehensive consultation process that will benefit rural elected officials.

Survey District Engineers

- 2) Correspondence was sent to the 8 (eight) District Engineers informing them of the newly formed subcommittee and requesting information related to the contact/consultations they have with elected officials throughout the year. Specifically we asked the following:
 - How does the DE prioritize projects for the COG/MPO regions for the Five Year Construction Program?
 - When does this happen?
 - Who makes the final decision?
 - How often do you revisit and re-prioritize projects?

It was our understanding that the District Engineers regularly meet with local elected officials regarding projects to include in the Five Year Construction Program. The purpose of asking these questions was to gain insight into processes already established in order to identify potential partnering when meeting with elected officials. Their responses were fairly consistent and taken into consideration when preparing the draft consultation policy. **[See Exhibit B, Summary of District Engineer Survey June 4, 2010]**

Outreach to Elected Officials and Tribes

- 3) After the subcommittee finalized the draft policy, a document was prepared that was sent directly to rural elected officials via email. **[See Exhibit C, Draft Transportation Consultation with Rural Officials]** This was accomplished with the help of ADOT Public Relations staff, who have current contact lists for all elected officials in rural areas.

- 4) The document was posted to the Tribal Transportation web site <http://www.aztribaltransportation.com/aztt/index.asp>.
- 5) A notice was sent to ITCA, ACIA, Katosha Nakai (State Tribal Policy Advisor), and Colorado TTAP
- 6) A notice was sent to ADOT's tribal transportation contacts

60 Day Review Period

- 7) In accordance with federal regulation, ADOT submitted the draft Transportation Consultation with Rural Elected Officials Policy [Exhibit C] to Rural Elected Officials throughout the State for the required 60 day review period. This was accomplished with the help of CCP Intergovernmental Affairs staff, who emailed the document to approximately 300 elected officials. The purpose of the 60 day review period was to solicit comments on the draft Policy. A survey link was provided within the attached document that enabled the elected official to easily link to the survey and provide comments. The review period began on September 1, 2010 and remained open thru December 31, 2010 (exceeding the required 60 days).
- 8) The draft policy was also reviewed by MPO and COG Regional Councils and Executive Boards.

Comment Resolution

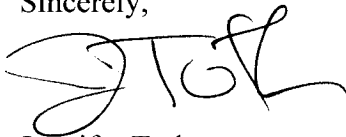
- 9) During the review period 24 comments were received. The subcommittee met one last time to review all comments received during the 60 day review period and formulate a response for each comment. Based on the comments, minor changes were made to the policy. [See Exhibit D, **Comment Resolution**]

Final Document

- 10) Through the process outlined above, ADOT was able to jointly craft a process for consultation that encourages greater cooperation among internal divisions within ADOT, and above all clearly identifies a consultation process that will be implemented at meaningful points in future studies and programs. The expectation of this process is to continue to develop a deeper understanding of rural transportation needs. [See Exhibit E, February 2011, **Transportation Consultation with Rural Officials**]

If you have any questions regarding this information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 602-712-8143

Sincerely,



Jennifer Toth
JT/cg
Attachments