

TOHONO O’ODHAM NATION CONSULTATION SESSION
MEETING SUMMARY NOTES
 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2022
 10:00 AM TO 11:30 AM

MEETING ATTENDEES

- Damascus Francisco, *Planning & Economic Development Department (PEDD) Executive Director, TON (Tohono O’odham Nation)*
- Beverly Matthews, *PEDD Realty Specialist, TON*
- David Madril, *PEDD Planner Supervisor, TON*
- Marilyn Celestine, *PEDD Administration Manager, TON*
- Erwin Rhodes, *PEDD Planner, TON*
- Leo Porter Jr., *PEDD Planner, TON*
- Patricia Pablo, *PEDD Grant Writer, TON*
- Rebecca Ortega, *PEDD Realty Specialist, TON*
- Yuriko Toro, *Project Administrator, TON*
- Jason James, *Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) MPD*
- Don Sneed, *Planning Program Manager/Tribal Liaison, ADOT MPD*
- Kristen Faltz, *Kimley-Horn*

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Jason James welcomed attendees and introduced the Project Team.

2. P2P OVERVIEW

Jason James provided an overview of ADOT’s performance-based Planning-to-Programming (P2P) process, which is used to prioritize projects on the state highway system. He explained that performance-based planning is federal law and is also required by State statute.

- Jason shared a flowchart that provided an overview of the annual P2P timeline. P2P starts with the planning process, which includes project nominations and prioritization. Following prioritization, the top performing projects are added to the 5-year program following State Transportation Board approval.
- Jason provided a detailed explanation of P2P scoring for pavement preservation, bridge preservation, modernization, and expansion projects, as well as annual investment target amounts. He also provided a breakdown of the scoring percentages for technical, district, and policy components.
- He mentioned that a Tribe can nominate projects by submitting them directly to him, through the ADOT District Engineer/Administrator, or the Tribe’s regional council of governments (COG) or metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Project nominations need to be supported by data and are scored based on how well they meet the P2P scoring criteria.
- Don clarified that the P2P Process is comprised of 11 steps. Don provided an overview of the steps for those who were on the phone. He shared that when a project does not make the P2P list, it is a part of the process again the following year.
- Don stated that he believes councils of governments (COGs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) provide notice to their member tribal partners of the P2P process and schedule. He asked if meeting attendees were aware of the P2P process so that they can participate in ADOT district P2P workshop meetings if desired.

- Patricia Pablo stated that she sits on the transportation planning committee with CAG and has heard discussion about the P2P process and schedule, although she is not aware of the Tribe receiving an official notice about P2P.
- Don shared that the official notice would likely go to the tribal executive.
- Jason stated that when the next round of the P2P process begins, ADOT will be adding all attendees from the consultation sessions on the contact list for the ADOT district P2P workshop and project nominations.
- Don stated that in the past two years, ADOT has left member agency contact regarding the P2P process and schedule in the hands of the COGs and MPOs but that may have created a gap in communication. He also shared that ADOT has received a high level of tribal participation when conducting these ADOT Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) consultation sessions, which should help future communication between ADOT and the tribes as ADOT now understands better who the contacts are and should be at tribal nations for correspondence related to the P2P process and schedule.
- Damascus Francisco mentioned that the Tribe has an active presence in PAG. They also need to look into getting involved with Maricopa County and Pinal County and their regional planning organizations.
- Damascus inquired who submits the nomination for P2P.
 - Jason stated that ADOT is flexible. He shared that it is better to have buy-in from the ADOT district before submitting the nomination, but the source of the nomination does not matter. However, the project nomination does require information on the mile post, scope, cost estimate, and supporting plans.
- Patricia inquired if the P2P process also applies to airports.
 - Jason stated that airports are under a different program and would go through Matthew Munden. The P2P process strictly relates to roadways, bridges, and safety on the roadway.
 - Don stated that ADOT held a meeting recently with airport managers. During this meeting, Matthew mentioned capital improvement plans (CIPs) are what needs to be developed and utilized to program improvements needed at tribal airports.

3. LRTP OVERVIEW

Jason provided an overview on ADOT's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the update that is specific to this tribal outreach effort.

- Damascus asked if the PowerPoint was available to review later.
 - Jason stated that the PowerPoint is attached to the meeting invitation but if he could not access it, Jason could send it to the group.

4. TON PRIORITIES/COMMENTS

The Project Team led an open discussion on priorities specific to TON and any additional questions or comments attendees had.

- Damascus stated that the roadways within the TON need to be preserved. The Tribe also wants to expand their transit system to span a larger area and at a higher frequency.
- David Madril stated that the shoulder on State Route (SR) 86 from Sells going westbound to Ajo needs to be widened. He also mentioned that school bus pullout safety is an issue on SR86. There are also pavement preservation projects occurring for safety reasons.
 - Jason asked if there have been any fatal crashes at the location of the needed shoulder widening.

- David stated that he does not have that data but said it is more than likely there have been due to the lack of shoulder. There is likely data for that that can be reviewed.
 - Jason stated that if there has been a fatality on that section of the roadway, the project could qualify for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding. He shared that if the Tribe has the data, he can direct them to the HSIP group at ADOT.
 - Don stated that a corridor study was completed several years ago for SR 86. The study was performed from both end points of the roadway, including the TON reservation. The ADOT Southcentral District is using this document to prioritize improvements for the roadway. When a project is under construction, part of the process is to ensure the roadway is up to standard code, which typically includes adding shoulders.
 - Jason confirmed that that is his understanding as well. Jason to follow up with the ADOT Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division to confirm.
 - Damascus stated that that is his understanding as well and he has talked with Patricia regarding a project that ADOT is starting just outside of Sells, as well as another on SR 86. The Tribe was hoping this project included shoulder widening.
 - Damascus stated that citizens state concerns on SR 86 on the western side of the reservation. There have also been accidents on this road with both tribal members and non-tribal drivers.
 - Damascus stated that signage is also lacking on the west side of the TON. Drivers are often going to Rocky Point, but they enter the reservation and cannot navigate the way out. TON would like more signage to show mileage to Why and Rocky Point.
 - Damascus stated that SR 86 serves as a bus stop for children but there is no signage warning for the bus stop. People have seen the buses stop on the road to let children on and off. The preparatory school also picks up students from the reservation along the roadway.
- Jason shared that one of the themes ADOT is seeing is lack of communication between ADOT and the tribes and a lack of notification of upcoming projects on tribal land. He inquired if the relationship with the ADOT Southcentral District is good or if there is a gap in communication.
 - Damascus inquired if Merissa Marin is a representative from the ADOT Southcentral District.
 - Don stated that she is the right-of-way liaison for ADOT.
 - Don shared that the district engineer is Rod Lane and Jeremy Moore is the assistant district engineer.
 - Damascus stated that Merissa is a part of the meeting the Tribe has with ADOT to go over the projects that are already being implemented. He stated that the Tribe needs to improve communication with the ADOT Southcentral District.
 - Damascus stated that ADOT districts are confusing as they are often confused with BIA districts.
 - Patricia stated that she remembers someone from ADOT would often check on SR 86. Since then, she knows that Rod sits on PAG with her but that he is the only individual she knows from ADOT who coordinates regularly with TON.
 - Patricia shared that the Tribe has been told in the past to voice concerns to the ADOT Southcentral District office in Tucson. When sitting on PAG, Patricia asked for clarification on where she should report TON concerns. She wants confirmation on the point of contact for the tribe's concerns.
 - Don stated that he normally would recommend tribal governments contact the ADOT district engineer directly but if there is trouble making communication, reach out to Paula or himself (ADOT's tribal liaisons). If TON needs assistance

setting up meetings with the district, the tribal liaisons can help establish contact. If it is related to another mode of transportation besides automobile travel, there are other contacts the tribal liaisons can provide.

- Jason asked if there have been any projects identified by the Tribe resulting from the Arizona-Sonora Border Master Plan.
 - Damascus stated that he is unaware of any.
 - Jason stated that Mark Sanders is the project manager and was supposed to reach out to the tribe. Jason to follow up with Mark Sanders.
- Damascus asked what the status is of the I-11 project.
 - Don stated that ADOT just received notice that the state legislature has provided funding for the Environmental Impact Study, Tier 2. This will likely be underway next year. It will follow the same tribal outreach process as the first process. In the Tier 2 study, a more refined corridor alignment will be determined. The Tier 1 recommended alignment did not traverse TON tribal land. It cuts south of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe reservation and northeast of the TON's tribal land, west of Tucson, and stays just west of I-10.
 - Damascus stated that he saw one preliminary alignment alternative where the corridor comes right to the end of the Tribe's northern boundary to meet with I-8. Is this alignment still being considered? That corridor is heavily traveled by the tribe.
 - Don said he believes it is but can follow up.
 - The link to the updated I-11 website is <http://i11study.com/Arizona/index.asp>
- Jason inquired what other concerns and challenges the Tribe has outside of transportation.
 - Damascus stated that the Tribe has issues with housing, but the housing authority has been active in addressing the need. Any type of economic development for TON, such as infrastructure and structures, has been pending. The new federal funds that are available have allowed for movement on this but there does need to be a more strategic land use plan.
 - Jason asked if TON plans to develop an economic development plan in the future or has had one previously.
 - Damascus stated that he does not think there has been one completed in the past. This may be something the Tribe will look at in the future.
 - Marilyn stated that there was a plan done in the past, but it was general and will need to be updated. It was done around 2006 by the department of economic development.
 - Jason stated he was wondering because with the ADOT LRTP, even though it is focused on the state highway system, we are also looking at other factors that are outside of the scope. For example, ADOT understands that water availability is an issue in the state and expanding the transportation network puts further stress on these resources. The more we understand from our partners where the economic generators are, it provides a bigger picture.
 - Damascus stated that he appreciated Jason's comment, and it was for that same reason that he had invited the planners at the Tribe to this meeting as the roadway network will have a large impact on all planning efforts in the Tribe.
 - Patricia asked if there is a copy available of the previous ADOT LRTP so that she can get an idea of the final product.
 - Jason confirmed that the previous ADOT LRTP is available and that he would share the link. He shared that in the last update, there was very minimal discussion with the tribes, which is why these individual

- conversations with the tribes are taking place. ADOT wants to expand and improve upon that.
- The link to the previous ADOT LRTP is <https://azdot.gov/planning/transportation-programs/state-long-range-transportation-plan>
 - Jason shared that if there are any questions related to the previous ADOT LRTP, please reach out to him.
 - Patricia asked if the current LRTP update is in process and if ADOT's plan is finalizing the update next year.
 - Jason confirmed this is correct. ADOT is working on a forecast for the next 20 years as well as the next 5 years.
 - Patricia stated with some funds, the Tribe wanted to do a comprehensive economic development plan so by the next five-year update, she should have that updated.
 - Don mentioned that Jerry James used to check on the state roads within tribal land but he is now in a different position at ADOT under the State Engineer's office now. Jerry was always interested in meeting with TON regarding tribal transportation concerns.
 - Patricia confirmed Jerry was good at communicating with TON
 - Don asked that the attendees look at the ADOT LRTP survey. He stated that in future years, if TON has plans for large development that will be traffic generators, they should inform ADOT as those are projects ADOT would really like to hear about as they could impact the state transportation system.
 - The survey can be accessed at www.adot2050plan.com
 - Don inquired if there are any issues identified on SR 86 through Road Safety Assessments (RSAs) that would be helpful. If so, Don requested that that information be shared with him.
 - Damascus stated that there were comments that were made in regard to Route 15, related to traffic control, and speeding on SR 86, as this provides access to Rocky Point. The Tribe also gets requests from cities that want to come through TON with wide-load traffic. A tribal ordinance now restricts when that can happen. Within the past 12 months, there was a jack-knifed truck incident there.
 - Damascus inquired if there are any updates on the wildlife overpass project on SR 86.
 - Don stated that he has not heard any updates on that project. The ADOT District will need to be contacted to provide an update to the tribe.
 - Regarding Ajo Transportation, Rebecca Ortega noted that the transit service has a rider that uses the bus who is wheelchair-bound. Drivers have expressed concern regarding how the buses are partially parked on the roadway. They are worried they are putting people in danger.
 - Jason inquired if this stop location is on or off of SR 86.
 - Rebecca stated that drivers were told that they cannot park on the dirt road. She has mentioned this to another individual on the PAG committee.
 - Jason to follow up on this. If this is a safety issue on a state route, this is something that ADOT may be able to help with. He does not know of any ADOT policy that prevents the bus service from stopping on the dirt road. Jason to follow up with the ADOT Transit staff.
 - Don stated that it may be a matter that the shoulder is not there. He requested that Rebecca provide the mile post of this location. He also requested more information on the bus program.
 - Rebecca stated it is called Ajo Transportation.
 - Damascus stated that the transit program is through the PAG Regional Transportation Authority (RTA).
 - Patricia inquired if the ADOT LRTP includes the airport development plans.

- Jason shared that they are referenced but the document does not include the plans.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

The Project Team thanked representatives from TON for their participation in the Consultation Session.

6. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following links provide additional resources:

- [State Long Range Transportation Plan](#)
- [Planning to Programming Information](#)