



Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

September 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes

DATE: September 23, 2021
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
LOCATION: Via ZOOM Webinar

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Larry Halberstadt - *Chair*
(Payson)

Scott Warren
(Gila County)

Rick Powers
(Globe)

Amanda Kenney
(Kearny)

Nina Arredondo
(Pinal County)

Lana Clark
(Superior)

Barney Bigman
(San Carlos Apache Tribe)

Sylvia Kerlock
(Winkelman)

Jason James
(ADOT - MPD)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tim Grier
(Star Valley)

Sandra Shade
(Ak-Chin Indian Community)

VACANT
(Hayden)

Tara Chief
(White Mountain Apache Tribe)

John Schempf
(Mammoth)

Micah Gaudet
(Miami)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Todd Pryor
(Superior)

Bill Clemans
(Payson)

Jeff Minefee
(ADOT Southeast District)

David Do
(ADOT LPA)

Jennifer Love
(AECOM)

CAG Staff:

Travis Ashbaugh
(Transportation Planning Manager)

I. Call to Order

Chair Halberstadt called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Halberstadt led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Roll call was taken. Nine (9) voting members were present, constituting a quorum as established by the CAG TTAC Bylaws.

IV. Introductions & Title VI Notice

Introductions were made individually on the Webinar. Mr. Ashbaugh, at this time, read a statement of where and how to file a complaint regarding Title VI violations.

V. Approval Of Minutes – (August 12, 2021)

Chair Halberstadt asked if corrections to the draft minutes were in order. Mr. Warren stated that on page three (3), paragraph five (5) that the first sentence should read:

“Mr. Barnes, City of Globe, presented in partnership with Gila County, their sidewalk improvement project.”

Mr. Warren made the motion to approve the August 12, 2021 minutes as amended. Mr. Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Call to the Public

No one answered the call to the public.

VII. Standing Reports

A. Member Jurisdictions

Gila County

Mr. Warren reported on two (2) items:

1. A redesign kick-off meeting was held on September 9, 2021 between ADOT and Gila County for the **“Main Street”** sidewalk project (**Project # GIL 09-01T | TRACTS # SL692**). A revised design will now involve an asphalt product. The goal now is to advertise this project with the **“Golden Hill Road”** road project as one in January/February 2022.
2. Received information from the US Fish and Wildlife Services that the **“Biological Opinion”** will not be done before the end of October 2021 for the **“Tonto Creek Bridge & Roadway Improvements – (FY22) – BUILD GRANT”** project (**Project # GIL 22-02C**). Construction is expected to now be delayed beyond the Spring of 2022. The County was hoping to start the ground clearing before nesting season but doesn't appear that will happen now.

Payson

Mr. Clemans reported on one (1) item:

1. The timeline for the **“Granite Dells Road”** project (**Project # PAY 19-01D**) has been pushed back slightly. The Town is coordinating with a current development that is underway that will help project out in the long term. The 60 percent design package is expected to be completed by October 15, 2021. Construction is still expected to be completed this fiscal year per the HURF Exchange guidelines.

B. Multi-Modal Planning Division, ADOT

Mr. James reported on one (1) item:

1. The ADOT District workshops for the **“Planning to Programming”** (P2P) planning cycle for FY23-FY27 are being scheduled between October 18, 2021 through November 5, 2021. ADOT is finalizing the overall scoresheets as part of the initial process for the Pavement, Bridge, and Modernization projects.

Mr. Ashbaugh asked if there was an update regarding the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) application cycle as the due date originally being projected for applications was going to be November 1, 2021. Mr. James responded that unfortunately there is no update and that the original projected November 1, 2021 application due date will significantly be pushed back, seeing that the Call-for-Projects has not been made at this point in time.

Chair Halberstadt asked Mr. James if he knew the reasoning for delaying the HSIP Call-for-Projects. Mr. James responded that ADOT Safety staff is still negotiating with ADOT Finance and leadership the amount that will be allocated for the HSIP application cycle.

C. Local Public Agency, ADOT

Mr. Do reported on four (4) items:

1. On September 2, 2021, the ADOT LPA section held a virtual training session regarding “Clearances,” which was Module 5 of 7. The recording of the training can be obtained from Cyndi Callahan (ccallahan@azdot.gov or 602-712-8330).
2. Scheduled for October 19, 2021, the ADOT LPA section will be holding a virtual training session regarding “Meeting Other Federal Requirements,” which will be Module 6 of 7.
3. The “Call-for-Projects” for FY23 “Off-System Bridge” funds is expected to be announced in November 2021. Applications are expected to be due late February 2022 with an anticipated available amount of \$3.9 million (\$1 million max per eligible project).
4. The “Every Day Counts” (EDC) Stakeholder meeting on Federal Aid Project Delivery was recently held. One of the topics discussed was the benefits of Pre-Scoping meetings for a given project. It’s a great opportunity to be open with stakeholders, ADOT representatives, and review team. Another topic discussed was Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracting, which provide an indefinite quantity of services for a fixed time. They are used when the General Services Administration (GSA) can’t determine, above a specified minimum, the precise quantities of supplies or services that government will require during the contract period. This way of contracting is similar to project bundling that was discussed in previous meetings.

D. District, Engineers, ADOT

Mr. Minefee from the Southeast District reported on three (3) items:

1. The “**US 60 Pinto Creek Bridge – MP 237**” bridge replacement project is now open to the public. An update of the demolition of the old bridge is expected for the October 2021 TTAC meeting.
2. Guardrail replacement is ongoing on SR-77 and SR-177 due to the Telegraph/Mescal fires during the summer and about 60 percent complete. The details on the fencing replacement is still ongoing and will probably be awhile before that goes out to bid.
3. The repairs on US-60 outside of Miami due to the recent floods will require road closures. The contractors will start the project as soon as they received the “Okay” from the emergency response staff in charge, which is expected any day now.

E. CAG Transportation Planning Update

Mr. Ashbaugh reported on one (1) item:

1. The hiring process for the “Mobility Management Coordinator” position continues. Interviews are scheduled for September 28, 2021.

VIII. Old Business

Transportation Improvement Program

No action was taken.

IX. New Business

A. Gila County Transit Governance Study – Final Report

Mr. Ashbaugh stated CAG was awarded a grant from ADOT to conduct the study has been active for the past thirteen (13) months. He stated that no action needs to be taken as this is an informational item only. He then introduced Jennifer Love, with AECOM, who was the Principal Planner in charge of the study. Ms. Love presented a summary of the Final Report.

Ms. Love presented the immediate needs of current transit providers and potential long-term goals. She also provided a summary of the different governance model recommendations that were generated based on the feedback from the Study's Technical Working Group (TWG) throughout the study. The implementation aspect of the study provides a list of next step actions, specifying the recommended responsible party to lead each step, in order to achieve those options, should the region pursue either option. A third option is to keep the status quo regarding who provides the transit programs. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Mr. Ashbaugh added that CAG would like to begin scheduling meetings in line with what the implementation steps lay out in determining if an "Exploratory Committee" should be pursued or work on finding a "Host Entity" as an interim, with both options ultimately leading to the formation of an Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (IPTA).

B. Eligible Roadways for STBGP Program Funding Per Agency

Mr. Ashbaugh stated that since the Committee will be discussing the future of the CAG STBGP application and process in the next agenda item and looking for improvements over the next several meetings, he wanted to share the document that lists all eligible road segments for each member agency for when the STBGP "Call-for-Projects" is announced. He stated the spreadsheet was created as a result of ADOT's latest Statewide reclassification efforts of the Federal Functional Classification system that was approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in December 2019.

Mr. Ashbaugh provided the explanation that if a road segment is classified as a "Rural Minor Collector," it is only eligible for STBGP funding if the segment is within a City/Town that has a population under 5,000. For road segments that may be classified as "Rural Minor Collector" that are within a City/Town that has a population above 5,000, then the segment is not eligible, however it is recommended that a reclassification be processed to make it eligible. A reclassification takes approximately two (2) weeks to process.

C. STBGP Application

At the last meeting, Mr. Ashbaugh stated that the Town of Superior made a request for the Committee to reevaluate the STBGP application process for adjustments or changes that would benefit every agency. He proceeded to provide a brief history of how the current application process came about.

Mr. Ashbaugh stated that during the CAG TIP Call-for-Projects in 2018, he provided a starting point for discussions of leaning towards using a model similar to the Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) STBGP application. Over the course of six months or so, the Committee evaluated the application and took components to design an application for the CAG Region that was recommended and approved by TTAC.



Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

September 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Ashbaugh stated since the inception of the approved CAG STBGP application/process, there has only been two (2) "Call-for-Project" announcements (2018 & 2019 respectively). During the process of the 2018 "Call-for-Projects," many adjustments needed to be made with the projects that were programmed years before, which created challenges as many projects were underfunded. He stated one of the reasons why the ADOT Cost Estimate Sheet is used within our process is to provide a better estimate for a given project that is being proposed. He also stated that when he took the position that he had many conversations with Committee members about why certain projects got in the TIP that clearly appeared to be underfunded when programmed. The general understanding was that many projects were created to fit an amount based on what was available rather than take a needed project and providing an estimate to then possibly scale back to fit the available amount. It was a matter of determining the detailed cost estimate and scaling back upfront of the process instead of making it work at the end. Typically, at the latter, scaling back was not considered and therefore additional funds were always needed to complete a project.

Mr. Ashbaugh discussed the local match requirements from FHWA with regards to utilizing STBGP funds (approximately 5.7 percent) and that he understands that the smaller agencies are more likely not able to provide such match. He stated fortunately ADOT reinstated the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) Exchange program that would allow a region to trade out their STBGP funds for State dollars and not require a local match. This option would allow the smaller agencies to go after funding.

Mr. Pryor ask if anyone knew why the awards of projects appeared to shift to certain agencies since about 2015. Mr. Ashbaugh responded stating that the CAG transportation planning boundaries changed in 2013 due to the Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and expansion of the Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) transportation planning boundaries taking a large portion of the population within Pinal County. He explained that with a shift in population to other organizations, the STBGP funds, which are population formula based, also shifted. Mr. Ashbaugh shared a spreadsheet of the past CAG TIPs dating back to 2010 and listed each project and the amounts awarded by local agency. Mr. Ashbaugh also stated when he started the position in March of 2016, not as many member agencies were attending the TTAC meeting. He stated during his first year, much of the work regarding the TIP was about cleaning it up and understanding if there were enough funds for the awarded projects as there were significant budgetary insufficiencies during many years. After the TIP was rectified for budgetary insufficiencies, the discussions regarding the revamping of the application began, leading to the next "Call-for-Projects." The 2018 "Call-for-Projects" had a larger amount to be programmed as a result of the TIP cleanup. During that period of time, meeting attendance was low, and several member entities missed out on the opportunity to submit projects, hence why all the projects during the 2018 call were able to be funded. He stated since the Committee agreed to a 10-year TIP, it will take awhile for the local agencies that are now attending more regularly that hadn't in the past, won't see a project for some time.

Mr. Powers mentioned that the spreadsheet that was provided lists Highway Safety Improvement Programs HSIP funds and stated that this would skew the overall results of the analysis since HSIP is an ADOT process. Mr. Ashbaugh responded that he only listed the HSIP projects that were programmed prior to 2018 when CAG and the other COGs and MPOs received an annual HSIP allocation of funds along with the STBGP. He stated that anything that was put into the TIP that the CAG TTAC is not part of the process, such as the State's competitive HSIP application since 2018, and the State Revenue funded projects that some of the local agencies sought after, were not added to the list. The list is purely projects that the Committee had a responsibility in programming. Mr. Powers also pointed out that when it comes to the HSIP funds, it is highly data driven and therefore many times determines what projects will be funded. Mr. Pryor stated that data collection/reporting has been another issue too. He stated he tried to get a pedestrian crossing where there

were four (4) fatalities that occurred many years ago, but since it doesn't fit within the current five-years' worth of data, the project was ineligible. He said as a rural region, we need to push back on requirements that provides such limitations.

Mr. Pryor expressed his concern with the entire process and that in the past CAG help facilitate design as well as help with the grant application. At some point that stopped, and the smaller agencies essentially fell off the radar when going after the TIP funds. He stated CAG helped Superior build an on-ramp and that Superior didn't have the abilities to design it themselves. Therefore, CAG had done a lot of the engineering and scoping of the project. Mr. Pryor stated CAG needs to find a way for the agencies not to become divisive through competition of the available funds, as well as focus more on design/scoping issues rather than construction. He recommends using a year's worth of allocation to fund scoping like projects for agencies that do not have engineers on staff. Mr. James responded by stating that scoping is an eligible project using STBGP funds, however, it cannot go beyond the conception design phase of 15 percent design. He stated once you go beyond 15 percent, you have essentially federalized the project and need to construct within 10 years, otherwise you would have to pay back funds.

Mr. Powers stated that one of the tools that ADOT used to have was a program called "District Minor Projects" that provided opportunities for local agencies to partner up with ADOT on local projects. He stated it was competitive and one is never going to be able to get away from having competition, but it's another avenue that once was. Mr. James responded that the "District Minor Projects" program is still in existence. Those pot of funds run through the ADOT District offices so one would have to go through this process to access funds. These funds are also competitive among the ADOT Districts, adding another layer of competition.

Mr. Pryor overall emphasized that he understands CAG is always working towards an equitable and fair process for project recommendations, however, the process results are not always equitable and fair. He expressed that the Committee needs to look into how we can make that happen.

After discussion of the topic areas mentioned above, the following high-level suggestions were proposed, but not limited to discussing in forthcoming TTAC meetings:

1. Alternating turns among each agency to access funds.
 - a. Pros
 - i. Everyone gets a chance at the funding when it's their turn.
 - b. Cons
 - i. With 14 eligible agencies, this would take more than 10 years (beyond the time construction needs to be commenced) for a project to be designed and constructed.
 - ii. Limits projects to just the annual allocation. It is also believed that the annual allocation amount could decline in the future years due to transportation planning boundaries adjusting to Census figures and limited population growth, based on current formulas.
 - iii. Committee Bylaws would need to address meeting attendance problems. Would the agencies who are scheduled to receive funds in the later years of the 14 year period (years 10-14) show up for meetings? This could ultimately effect quorums.

2. Grouping local agencies and rotating “Call-for-Projects” every other year.
 - a. Pros
 - i. Smaller agencies in one group, allowing them a higher chance of having a project listed in TIP.
 - b. Cons
 - i. Although on a smaller scale, it would still be competitive based.
3. Larger communities help the smaller communities in engineering capacities.
4. Reevaluate what the ranking scores should be based on.

After the conversations regarding the larger communities versus smaller communities and the capabilities and capacities each may or may not have, Mr. Warren wanted to dispel the perception that Gila County has engineering staff that can produce roadway designs. They also don’t have that capability, however, he does recognize that the County more monetarily sound to seek consultants to do that kind of work. Chair Halberstadt also stated it’s tough for the Town of Payson to sit down and fully design a road project and always needs help as well.

Mr. James commented that the issues regarding equity and fairness regarding the programming of funds in a TIP is not unique to the CAG Region. He stated it’s an issue across all the COGs and MPOs. There is always room for improvement and appreciates the all the work that has been done for the discussions of the matter. He also emphasized to everyone in the Committee, that Mr. Ashbaugh is but one person trying to make all things work for all local agencies.

Mr. Ashbaugh closed the conversation by asking everyone to begin thinking of suggestions and define what “Fair” means when it comes to the CAG TIP process in programming projects by the next meeting.

D. Round Table

No round table discussions were made.

E. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Ashbaugh stated on the forefront of the meeting, continued discussions of the CAG STBGP Application process will take place. He also stated that the “**Hill Street**” project that is listed in the TIP will be removed.

X. Scheduling of Next Meetings

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 21, 2021.

XI. Adjournment

Chair Halberstadt adjourned the meeting at 12:10 PM.