



DISCUSSION POINTS FOR GOVERNOR'S GROWTH CABINET ISSUE PAPER

The following discussion points were provided as part of the testimony by Rural Transportation Liaison Kevin Adam to the Governor's Growth Cabinet on February 23, 2007:

1. *Current and projected statewide transportation needs are massive and impact all levels of government in rural and urban Arizona alike. The RTAC is encouraged that most Arizona public officials recognize this priority and are working towards solutions.*

2. *Rural officials are concerned that urban needs could potentially overshadow rural so that rural infrastructure demands will not be adequately addressed.*

- Rural growth is impacting safety and mobility in many communities throughout the State. Congestion is not just an urban issue as many rural communities are experiencing substantial growth and inadequate transportation infrastructure to support that growth.

- Urban growth places many additional stresses on rural infrastructure as people and freight move through rural Arizona to get to and from the urban centers.

- Urban regions cannot function as commerce centers without an efficient, reliable and functional statewide transportation network.

- In many aspects, rural and urban transportation needs are fundamentally different and decisions regarding equitable distribution are complex. The Casa Grande Resolves has been the most recent deliberative process regarding distribution. Future resource allocation decisions should not stray from the Resolves without another process equally as deliberative.

- The COG and MPO directors in cooperation with ADOT have initiated a statewide needs assessment study to update earlier planning documents. We encourage this collaborative effort and hope that the results of the study will provide better direction regarding statewide needs and priorities, revenue options, and a long-range transportation planning framework for the State.

3. *State highway projects have a wide variety of planning impacts to rural communities.*

- State highways are often main streets in rural communities. New projects or modifications to current highways impact local planning and zoning, local street systems, other public infrastructure such as sewer lines and access to local businesses. Because of the wide variety of impacts, any improvements to cooperation and coordination between local governments and ADOT are encouraged.

- Expanded use of the rural COG's and MPO's to facilitate communications between ADOT and rural local governments could improve coordination efforts.

- We commend ADOT for the Arizona Statewide Access Management Program and the stated purposes of establishing consistent (and predictable) standards for planned roadway functions and the promotion of better coordination of land use and transportation planning. We anxiously await the outcome of the program's development and implementation.

4. Unfunded mandates passed on to local governments, including rural COG's and MPO's, continue to be a concern for rural communities.

- Rural local governments and their regional planning organizations often operate with modest resources. Staff time and funding commitments need to be prioritized and used efficiently. Extraneous reporting requirements often passed on to local governments can be counterproductive to implementing sound local transportation planning.

5. Potential concerns regarding the withholding of state discretionary funding from certain communities for noncompliance with the Cabinet's recommendations.

- Awaiting the specific recommendations of the cabinet. We encourage incentivizing compliance rather than withholding funding for noncompliance.

- Compliance with new standards is not necessarily best measuring stick for assessing needs for the funding. Penalties could take funding away from communities that need it most.

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