



Arizona Department of Transportation

February, 2011

Transportation Consultation with Rural Officials





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Consultation meetings will be held within each COG/MPO region. The objective of the meetings is to present information and gather input from elected and appointed officials.
- The COG/MPO, and ADOT, will cooperatively agree on the timing of meetings to coincide with key decision points during the planning and programming processes. ADOT will, at a minimum, hold at least one meeting per year in each COG and MPO region.
- Meetings will be conducted in a round-table format. When possible, these meetings will occur prior to or after the regularly scheduled COG Regional Council or MPO Executive Board meeting.
- ADOT will make every effort to offer alternative methods to allow local elected and appointed officials to attend scheduled meetings. This may include the use of video-conference, webinars, go to meeting, and electronic versions of the presentation with comment forms.

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is the primary decision maker for federal-aid transportation plans and investments in non-metropolitan areas with populations below 50,000. However, ADOT understands the importance of consulting with local governments before, during, and after the decision making process to ensure participation results in improved transportation system planning, performance and project development. Therefore, ADOT has developed guidelines that outline the consultation process, and defines how and when outreach will occur with officials from rural areas. The highlighted column to the left is an abbreviated version of those guidelines.

The primary guidelines for state consultation with non-metropolitan local officials are contained in the FHWA and FTA joint rulemaking, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning: Part 450 Planning Assistance and Standards. (*Federal Register: February 14, 2007, Part III*). According to 23 CFR 450.210(b) ***At least once every five years (as of February 24, 2006), the State shall review and solicit comments from nonmetropolitan 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.***

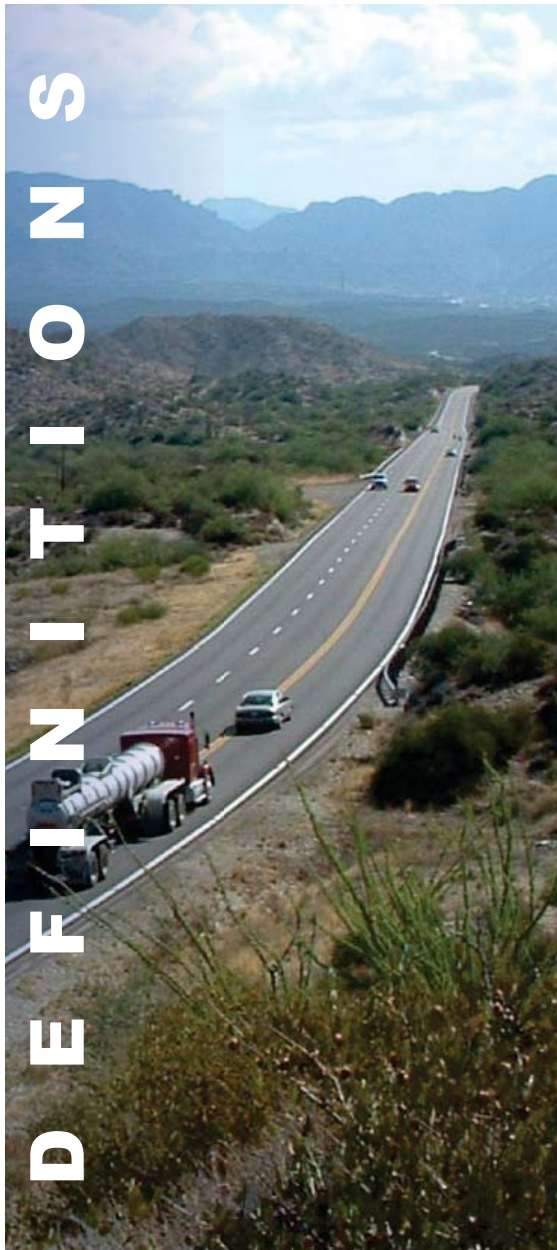
It is intended that this document is subject to review and revision every 5 years. In the event that Congress enacts new transportation language, this document will be subject to immediate revision.

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DEFINITIONS



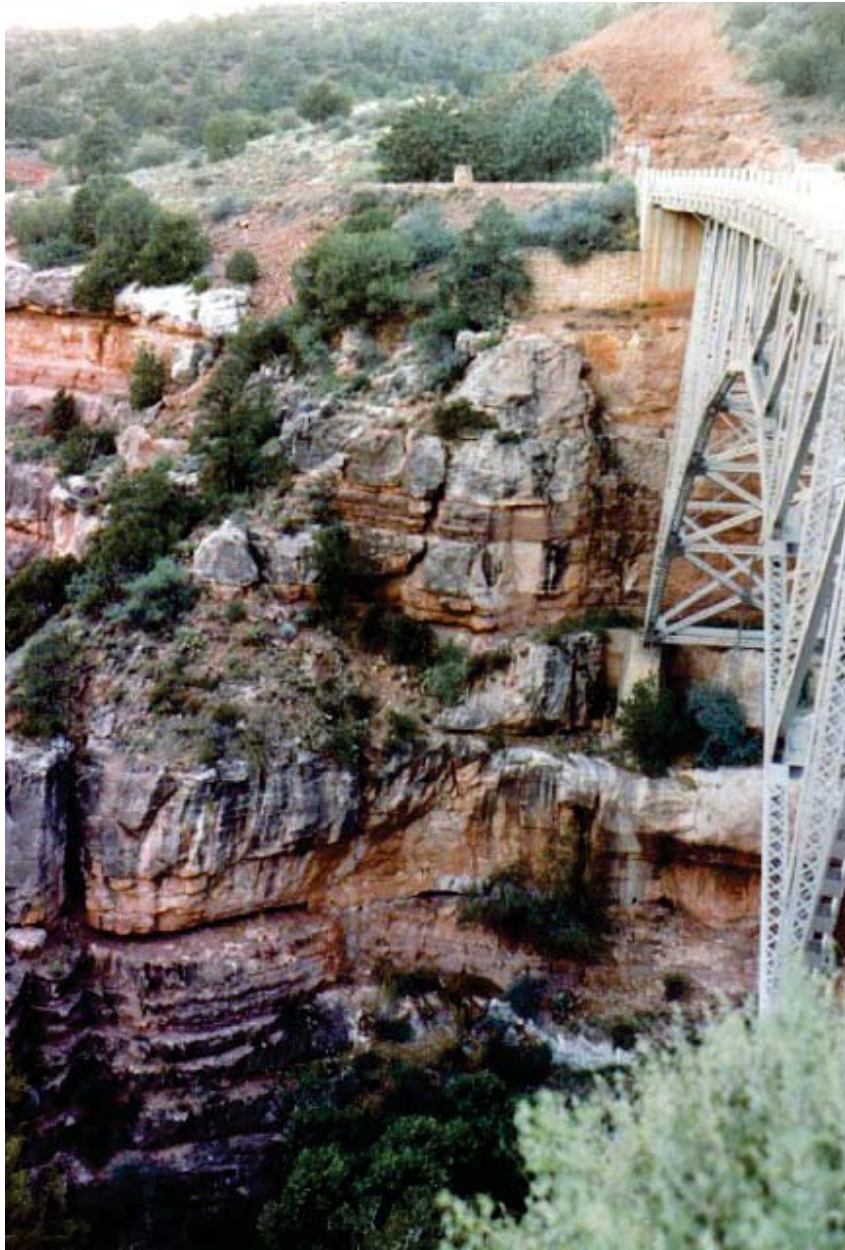
DEFINITIONS

Non-metropolitan area – includes all areas of the state that are located outside of Arizona’s two (2) large metropolitan areas (Phoenix/MAG and Tucson/PAG).

Non-metropolitan local officials – elected and appointed officials of general purpose local government and tribal governments in non-metropolitan areas with jurisdiction and responsibility for transportation. In Arizona, elected and appointed local officials are directly involved through the Council of Governments (COGs) and small urban Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Those who *may* be involved in the non-metropolitan local consultation process include, but are not limited to, the following:

- County Supervisors
- City or Town Council Members
- State Legislators
- Mayors
- State Transportation Board Members
- Tribal Officials
- Citizen Appointees and Advisory Boards

Consultation – a process by which ADOT will confer with non-metropolitan local officials in accordance with the established process (described within this document). Prior to formal adoption of the State Long-Range Transportation Plan and the State Transportation Improvement Program/Five-Year Facilities Construction Program, Arizona DOT will consider the views of the non-metropolitan local officials. Periodical updates will also be provided to the non-metropolitan local officials.



Transportation Consultation with Rural Officials

Final Policy

February, 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) recognizes the importance of public outreach and communication, especially as it relates to the transportation planning and programming process. An open exchange of information among transportation users and government officials leads to better decision-making and more publically supported programs and projects. With increasing demands on limited resources, transportation programs and projects need public support through an open and inclusive planning process.

ADOT developed the process of State Consultation with Non-Metropolitan Local Officials to ensure the opportunity for meaningful dialogue with local elected/appointed officials and tribal governments during transportation planning and programming activities, including the development of the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan and the State Transportation Improvement Program/Five-Year Facilities Construction Program. The Consultation process is separate and discrete from the general public participation process as well as from the participation process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



1) At least once every five years (as of February 24, 2006), the State shall review and solicit comments from nonmetropolitan 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.

2) The State, at its discretion, shall be responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes. If a proposed change is not adopted, the State shall make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, including notification to nonmetropolitan

II. LEGISLATION

As part of the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and continued in the 2005 SAFETA-LU, federal policy makers aimed to ensure that non-metropolitan local officials are empowered to provide sufficient input and involvement in the statewide planning and investment decision-making processes. The primary guidelines for state consultation with non-metropolitan local officials are contained in the FHWA and FTA joint rulemaking, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning: Part 450 Planning Assistance and Standards. (Federal Register: February 14, 2007, Part III).

23 CFR 450.210(b): The State shall provide for non-metropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan (LRTP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The State shall have a documented process for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials representing units of general purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation

in the development of the LRTP and the STIP. Although the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) shall not review or approve this consultation process, copies of the process document shall be provided to the FTA and the FHWA for informational purposes.

III. PLANNING PARTNERS

The Arizona Department of Transportation is committed to the development of strong external and internal partnerships. One of the many important external partnerships is with the COGs and MPOs that are responsible for regional transportation planning, and with the state's twenty-two federally recognized Indian tribes. In addition to the COGs, MPOs, and tribes, an important partner is the Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC).

Internally, ADOT Multimodal Planning Division (MPD), Intermodal Transportation Division (ITD), and Communication and Community Partnerships (CCP) work in collaboration with regional transportation planning entities and stakeholders to ensure interests are represented and input is incorporated into planning and programming efforts.



Multimodal Planning Division

The Multimodal Planning Division (MPD) of ADOT is committed to providing the highest quality transportation research, plans, and programs to the public. The central objective of MPD is to help identify current significant transportation issues in Arizona as well as improve existing systems. MPD is also committed to researching and planning the development of supporting strategies needed to optimize investment to preserve and expand the State's transportation infrastructure. In recent years, ADOT has strengthened its level of outreach to rural areas by employing Regional Planners to serve as a liaison between the department and the State's Council of Governments. Each planner is responsible for acquiring and transmitting as much expertise as possible on transportation activities carried out in the region as well as managing all ADOT planning studies and participating as a voting member on Technical Advisory Committees.

Intermodal Transportation Division

The ADOT District Engineers play a key role in developing the Five Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program. They attend monthly city and county government meetings, monthly COG and MPO meetings, Tribal meetings,

and interact with individual supervisors and mayors, as well as stakeholder groups. They identify candidate projects in cooperation with the COGs and MPOs ensuring that local and regional needs are recognized.

Communication and Community Partnerships

The Communications and Community Partnership Division (CCP) provides intergovernmental affairs support for ADOT divisions with the elected officials and key staff of cities, towns and counties throughout Arizona.

Arizona Council of Governments (COGs)

In Arizona, there are four rural Council of Governments (COGs), and two urban COGs (Maricopa Association of Governments, and Pima Association of Governments). Through an Executive Order, the planning boundaries were established by Governor Jack Williams in 1970 in response to federal planning requirements and in an effort to achieve uniformity in various planning areas. COGs, as voluntary associations, have formed within these planning boundaries. In the non-metropolitan areas of Arizona, the COGs perform planning services and direct service functions such as operating the Area Agency on Aging, the Head Start programs and employment programs.



The COGs are forums of cooperative transportation decision making among various county and local government jurisdictions. The COGs in Arizona are the Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG), the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG), the Western Arizona Council of Governments (WACOG), and the Southeastern Arizona Government Organization (SEAGO). Membership in COGs is open to all incorporated cities and towns within each COG region, as well as counties, and tribal governments.

ADOT supports the COGs in performing regional planning responsibilities through the provision of financial and technical support. Federal transportation planning funds known as “State Planning and Research” (SPR) are made available by ADOT to all rural COGs and small MPOs on a discretionary basis.

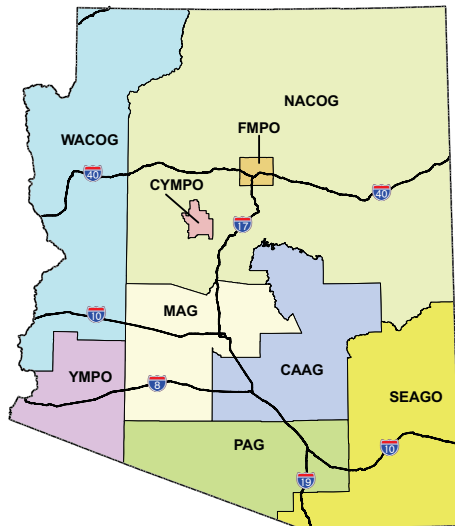
Arizona Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

In 1973, the Federal Transportation Act required that each urbanized area (area with 50, 000 or more population) establish a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The federal law required that the Governor of the state designate the agency to serve as the MPO. The MPOs in Arizona

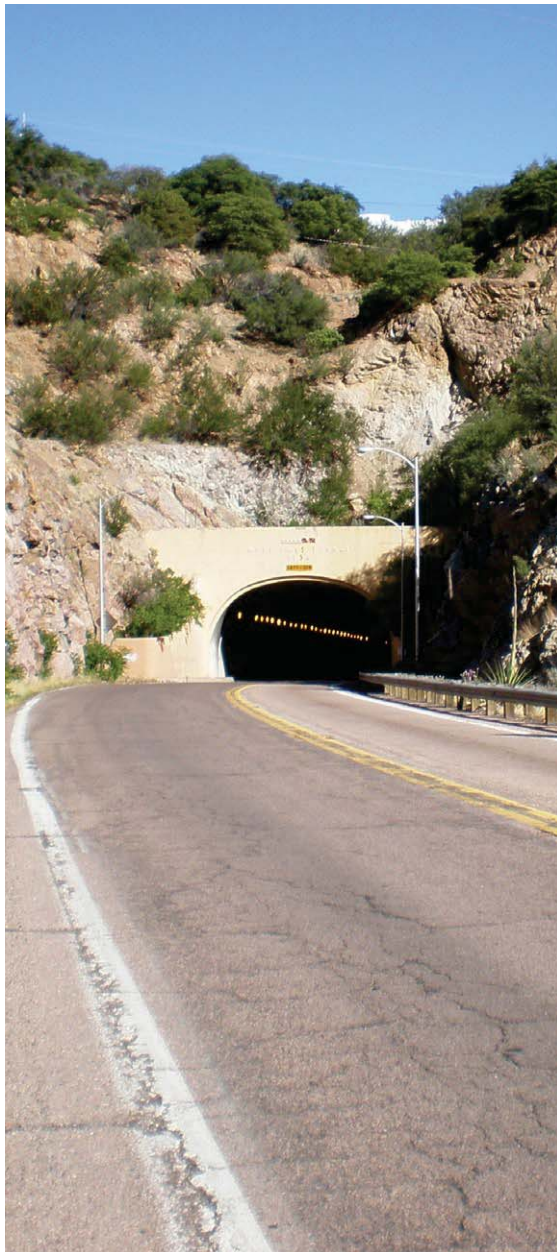
are Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization (FMPO), Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization (CYMPO), and Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO). In the urban areas (200,000+ population), the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Pima Association of Governments (PAG) are the designated MPOs for transportation planning.

In 1991, President Bush signed into law the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). This Act enunciated its statement of policy as follows: “To develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, provides the foundation for the Nation to compete in the global economy and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner.”

Federal legislation recognized the challenge of addressing congestion and air quality issues in urbanized areas and determined that MPOs could address these issues. The enhanced planning role for MPOs was defined as follows: “Metropolitan Planning Organizations, in cooperation with the State, shall develop transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas of the State. Such plans and



Arizona Metropolitan Planning Organizations



programs shall provide for the development of transportation facilities which will function as an intermodal transportation system for the State, the metropolitan areas, and the Nation. The process for developing such plans and programs shall provide for consideration of all modes of transportation and shall be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate, based on the complexity of the transportation problems.”

Legislation requires MPOs to have a proactive public involvement process and to represent all modes of transportation. In addition to receiving greater requirements, MPOs were also provided a larger amount of federal transportation funding.

While federal regulations do not require states to extend their process of consultation with non-metropolitan officials to MPO regions, ADOT has elected to invite the small MPOs (YMPO, FMPO, and CYMPO) to participate.

Tribal Governments

There are twenty-two (22) federally recognized Native Nations/Indian Tribes with reservation land in Arizona. This tribal land encompasses approximately 27,736,000 acres or 28% of Arizona’s

land base. Federal transportation legislation requires state departments of transportation to coordinate, cooperate and consult with Tribal Governments/Native Nations in statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes. It is the intent of ADOT to also invite elected officials from tribal governments to participate in the non-metropolitan consultation process.

Rural Transportation Advocacy Council

The Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC) is a consortium of local governments, COGs, and MPOs representing the transportation concerns of rural Arizona. The voting members of RTAC are appointed by each participating COG and MPO. Typically, this role is filled by the COG or MPO chairperson or a designated representative. Member jurisdictions include the 13 counties outside the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas and their respective cities, towns and counties. These member jurisdictions contribute annual dues to support the organization’s primary duty of setting legislative priorities for rural Arizona. To achieve this end, RTAC employs a full-time rural transportation liaison.



A complete summary of Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan outreach efforts may be found by accessing the following link:



http://www.whatmovesyouarizona.gov/your_home.asp

IV. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING DOCUMENTS

Planning

Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Statewide Long-Range (20-year) Transportation Plan is the compass for the Department’s long-term direction. It is a plan to provide for the development, operation and maintenance of Arizona’s multimodal statewide transportation system. The goals and strategies mapped out in the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan are used to determine priorities during the development of the Five-Year Facilities Construction Program, which is eventually incorporated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Throughout the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, ADOT is dedicated to taking a proactive approach to soliciting community and stakeholder comments early and often in the preparation of transportation-related studies. The fundamental principle of this effort is to create an atmosphere that will promote understanding, develop quality input, and build consensus on recommendations.

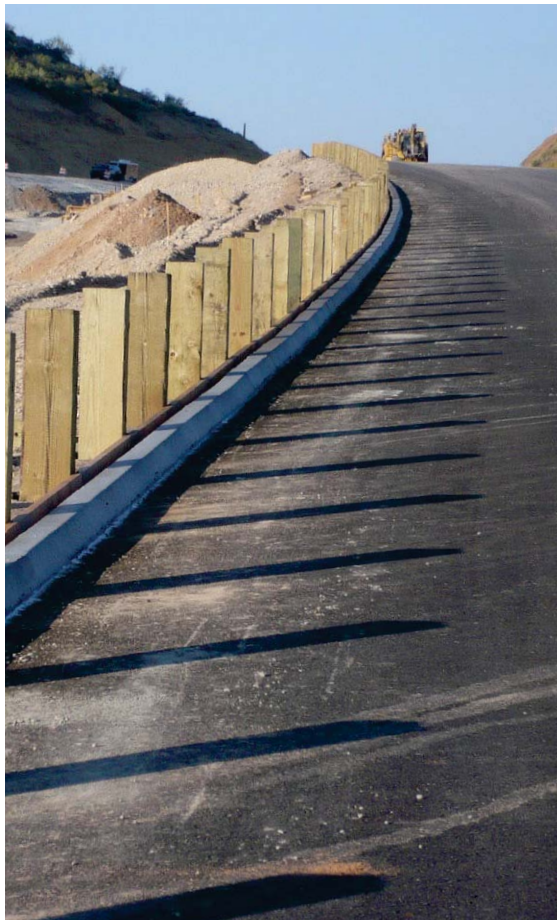
The LRTP is developed through a cooperative process involving interested parties including ADOT management and staff, other state, regional, county, and municipal public agency staff, elected officials, and the public. Throughout LRTP development, information is presented to and solicited from stakeholders through electronic communication (Web site, e-newsletters, email, etc.), individual interviews, small group meetings, public meetings, and other means of communication.

Programming

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is compiled annually, and covers a four-year period. The STIP is a staged, financially constrained, multi-year, statewide, intermodal program of transportation projects which is consistent with the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan and metropolitan transportation improvement programs.

Pursuant to **Title 23 U.S.C. 135 (f) (1991)**, there must be a reasonable opportunity for public comment on the proposed improvements program from interested



parties. Furthermore, the projects listed in the STIP must meet all the criteria of federal transportation legislation which is currently SAFETEA-LU.

Five Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program

The Five Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program for Highways and Airports is the primary mechanism to implement projects on the state transportation system. The Program is developed under the guidelines of the “Priority Programming Law” in Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS 28-6951) which sets guidelines that the department follows in prioritizing projects for the Program.

Since the needs usually outweigh the funds available, the decision-makers must prioritize projects. ADOT’s Priority Programming Process (PPP) produces multimodal and intermodal transportation projects based on performance measures that reflect the goals and policies of the Department, and Arizona’s stakeholders needs. The Program is the result of an extensive public participation and technical evaluation process. The State Transportation Board adopts the Program on or before June 30 of each year.

V. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 1) Consultation meetings will be held within each COG/MPO region regarding current planning studies underway such as the Long Range Transportation Plan, Five Year Construction Program, and State Transportation Improvement Program. The objective of the meetings is to present information and gather input from elected and appointed officials.
- 2) The COG/MPO, ADOT Multimodal Planning Division (MPD), Intermodal Transportation Division/District Engineer (ITD), and Community and Communication Partnership Division (CCP), will cooperatively agree on the timing of meetings to coincide with key decision points during the planning and programming processes. ADOT will, at a minimum, hold at least one meeting per year in each COG and MPO region.
- 3) Meetings will be conducted jointly by the COG/MPO, and ADOT staff in a round-table format. Ideally, the meeting should include the involvement of a State Transportation Board Member, the District Engineer(s), a CCP representative, and a member of the ADOT Multimodal Division. When possible, these meetings will occur



prior to or after the regularly scheduled COG Regional Council or MPO Executive Board meeting.

- 4) Prior to each meeting, the COG/MPO will determine the number of meetings, meeting location and appropriate officials to invite. The invitation list will be reviewed and approved by ADOT MPD and CCP prior to mailing invitations. A joint letter from ADOT MPD Director and the COG/MPO Director will be prepared and mailed by MPD to local officials.
- 5) The COG/MPO will alert officials approximately 4 - 6 weeks in advance of the meeting with a *save the date* notice. ADOT will make every effort to offer alternative methods to allow local elected and appointed officials to attend scheduled meetings. This may include the use of video-conference, webinars, go to meeting, and electronic versions of the presentation with comment forms.
- 6) ADOT MPD will document input received from local elected and appointed officials at the consultation meeting, and will prepare a meeting summary that includes input from officials, and responses to questions and issues raised. The COG/MPO will

distribute the meeting summary to all invitees, and make the summary available on appropriate websites.

- 7) During the annual State Planning Finding (SPF) conducted jointly by the FHWA and FTA, ADOT will provide documentation that a process has been adopted and followed to solicit and review comments from non-metropolitan, local officials on the effectiveness of the consultation process.

VI. REVIEW OF THE LOCAL OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION PROCESS

ADOT continually evaluates its outreach efforts. Planning staff is always seeking new and innovative techniques to incorporate with current practices in order to maximize outreach to non-metropolitan local officials. At least once every five years, 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.