

# **An Introduction to the Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization**



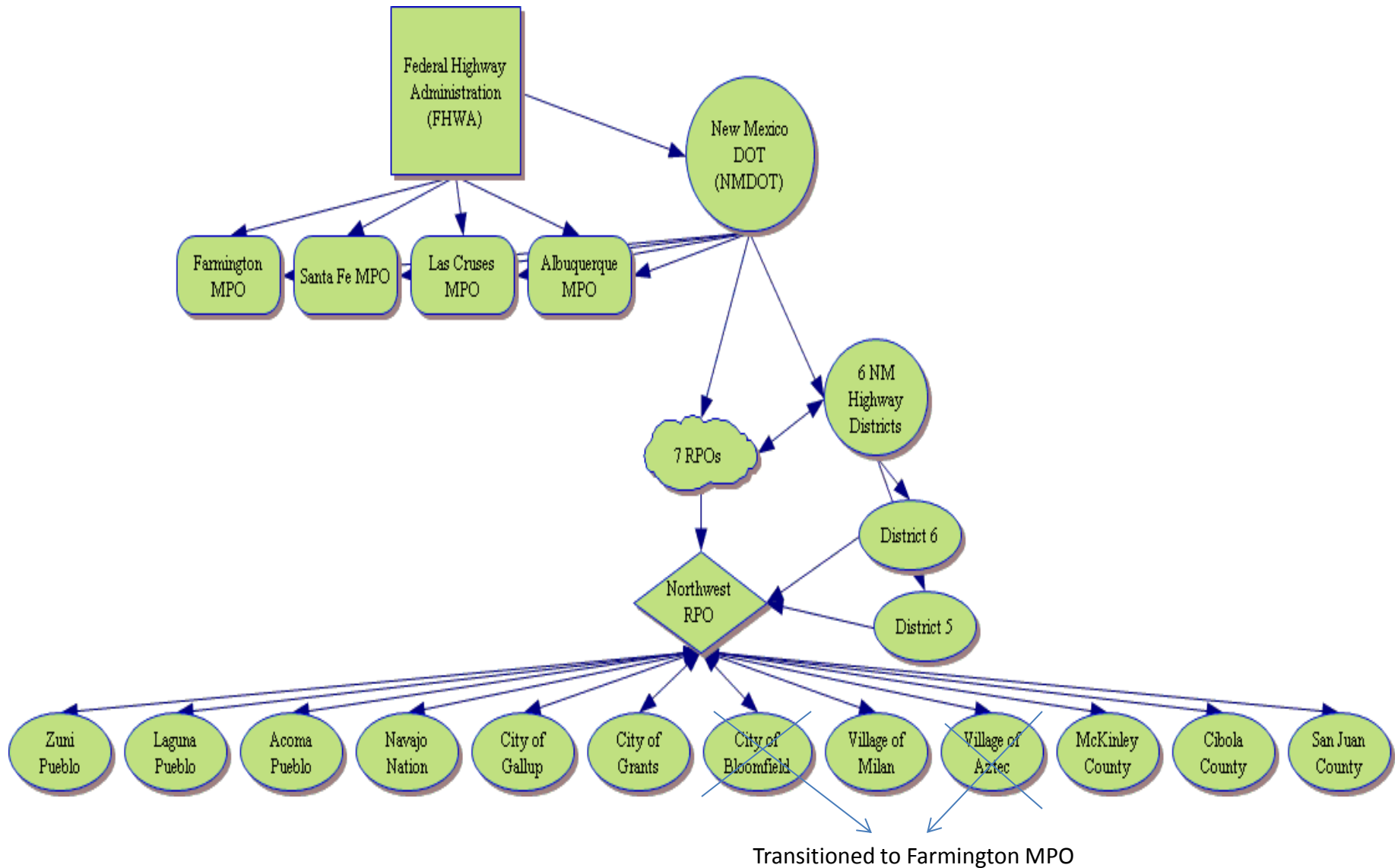
- 1. What and Who is the N.W.R.T.P.O.?**
- 2. What does the N.W.R.T.P.O. do?**
- 3. How does the R.T.P.O. support funding flow and local project implementation?**
- 4. What are some of the N.W.R.T.P.O.'s recent accomplishments?**
- 5. Funding for now and the future – how the R.T.P.O. can partner with local and state leaders to develop and maintain transportation infrastructure in a difficult economy.**

# I. What and Who is the N.W.R.T.P.O.?

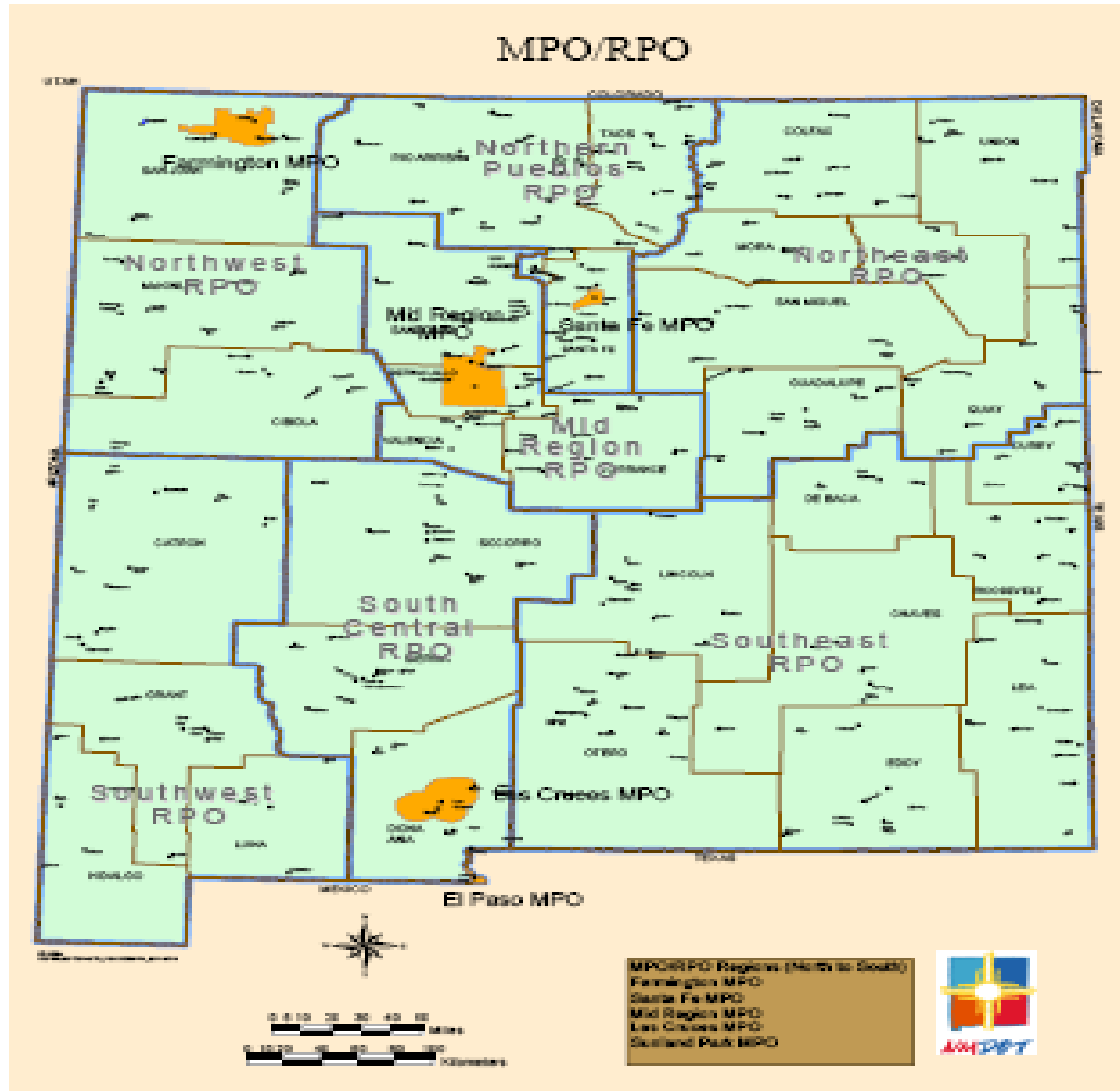


- The **N.W.R.T.P.O. Technical Committee (TC)** is a team of **transportation planners** consisting of one representative **from each municipal, county, and tribal government in San Juan, McKinley and Cibola Counties**. *With the exception of Aztec, Bloomfield, and Farmington – who are part of the Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization.*
- The R.T.P.O. TC **meets** on a **monthly** basis in collaboration **with** a variety of **N.M. Dept. of Transportation** representatives from both the **District 5 and District 6 Offices**, as well as from **Central DOT Administration** (*ref. NWRPO gen. roster*) to plan and **coordinate** a variety of **multi-modal transportation projects** cited in the next section. Public Transportation providers are also often contributing participants in these meetings.
- The R.T.P.O. TC provides collaboration and coordination for **development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure** shared between the various governments in Northwest N.M.
- The **N.W.R.T.P.O. Policy Committee** was blended with the Tech. Committee on Nov. 16, 2011. As such, Committee members are **authorized to enact policy decisions on behalf of the municipal, county or tribal governments** within San Juan, McKinley and Cibola Counties; this assumes discussion with their governing officials on the issues of discussion in advance of the meeting. The R.T.P.O. Policy Committee **approves** and **authorizes** on an annual basis, a) the **representatives** from each of their respective governments, b) the Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (**RTIPR**) – *a collaboratively generated document which prioritizes projects for the N.W.R.P.O. within the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) of the N.M. Dept. of Transportation*, and c) reviews and approves the **Annual Work Program** for the N.W. R.T.P.O.
- The Policy Committee may also be periodically called upon to approve and **authorize** certain **actions** recommended through Tech. Committee and N.M. DOT collaboration, **that impact upon the participating governments** in a significant or unusual manner.

# The NWRTPO Organizational Chart



# New Mexico MPO and RPO Boundaries



## 2. What does the N.W.R.T.P.O. do ?

- Through **monthly** collaborative **meetings** (involving NWRTPO & DOT Reps.) to **provide** cross-jurisdictional **coordination of transportation infrastructure maintenance and development**, the R.T.P.O. TC provides for the **equitable** development of projects by consensus prioritization and mutual support. The TC provides for more **efficient** and **effective project development** through resource / information sharing, discussion to ensure projects are meeting all regulation criteria for development through DOT, and tracking/reporting project progress from month to month.
- The R.T.P.O. provides an opportunity for local and tribal governments to partner with NMDOT to a) develop safe, efficient, effective and affordable transportation systems, b) collect data and identify transportation needs, and c) develop sound projects that are appropriate and affordable.
- The RTPO provides a **voice to local governments** in statewide **transportation policy development**, and engages statewide local **support for transportation legislation** through the seven RTPO's, along with the four MPO's in the state. This is particularly supported through the **RTPO Roundtable meetings**, which convene all seven RTPO's, in collaboration with DOT administration, on a quarterly basis.
- The RTPO increases funding opportunities for transportation projects through collaboratively **identifying** and communicating a variety of **funding opportunities** from private, local, state, and federal sources – as they develop or become available, which helps **leverage resources** to develop critical local projects that otherwise might not be possible.
- The RTPO adds leverage to local governments to garner state or federal funding support by providing a **unified voice for rural entities** to request projects and the funding needed for these projects.



**The RTPO is a collaborative team of local govt. representatives who generate mutual planning and support to more equitably, efficiently and effectively develop and maintain the transportation infrastructure shared by all our citizens and governments, through a varied and multi-modal range of project and funding options available through the New Mexico Dept. of Transportation (and other funding sources) as follows:**

- Funding for **basic infrastructure** including:
  - **Roadway** projects
  - **Bridge** projects
  - **Enhancement** projects (*improving existing infrastructure such as adding a bike / pedestrian path, sidewalk, curb and gutter, street lights, etc.*) (now under the TAP program)
  - **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) for Public Lands Roads** (*improvement for road corridors on public lands which significantly serve local populations*)
  - **Planning** projects:
    - Design
    - ROW (Right of Way)
    - Utilities
    - Environmental Clearances / Certification
    - SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) clearances /certification
- Funding for **safety projects** (*which contribute toward safer conditions for traffic and pedestrians - each year, as part of the DOT funding process, the NWRTPO evaluates and ranks safety applications*)
- Funding for **Long Range Transportation Planning** (*updated every 5 years – the last LRTP updated in 2007 , and a new update is now underway.*)
- Funding for **public transportation** services *There are four transit services in Northwest New Mexico (in RPO region) along with elderly & handicapped services, and each year, the NWRTPO evaluates and ranks their applications for funding, as part of the submission process to the NM-DOT Transit & Rail Division.*
- **Transportation Alternatives Program:**
- A) Funding for **Scenic Byway Development** *When an individual or group of local governments seeks to initiate a scenic byway, the application process involves the evaluation and (if more than one) ranking by the NWRTPO*
- B) Funding for **“Safe Routes to School”** *SRTS funding supports infrastructure development to create or improve safety features for school related traffic or pedestrians*
- C) Funding for **B.P.E. (Bicycle, Pedestrian, Equestrian)** Projects *This provides development of bicycle, walking, and horse trails – often alongside traffic corridors*
- **L.T.A.P. (DOT’s Local Technical Assistance Program)** Training Projects *The RTPO Planner works with DOT’s LTAP Program and other training sources to insure that a regular regiment of training for transportation development and safety are available to member govt.s based on priorities identified through the NWRTPO. The RPO Planner also facilitates regular / periodic orientation trainings on the role and function of the NWRTPO for local member governments.*
- **MAP-21:** *The new transportation bill consolidated many former discretionary programs under the Trans. Alternatives Program (TAP), but the RTPO still serves as the initial source of evaluative prioritization for all these categories, now competing under one TAP Program funding source, which beside Scenic Byway, SRTS and BPE includes enhancement and other multi-modal transportation funding. The NWRTPO also supports **Recreational Trails Program** funding.*

# Role of the RTPO: Sustaining Rural Transportation Assets

## Challenges for Rural Counties, Small Towns, & Tribal Governments

- **Low population density**
- **Limited tax revenues**
- **Lack of local match funding**
- **Low Federal Funding**
  - Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) Funding from the BIA: 535 Tribes share \$450 million nationwide (lower than even a small state's federal allocation)
- **Low Eligibility**
  - Insufficient average daily traffic counts on most roads to qualify for federal funding, in spite of the roads' strategic value to the rural communities.
- **Lack of trained human resources**
  - A lack of local technical expertise & personnel to move projects efficiently & effectively, as compared to large metropolitan areas (and MPO's).
- **Sovereignty issues**
  - The need to respect Tribal sovereignty, jurisdictional boundaries, land status, rights-of-way, etc. – developing and sustaining multi-jurisdictional roads is complicated and often challenging!

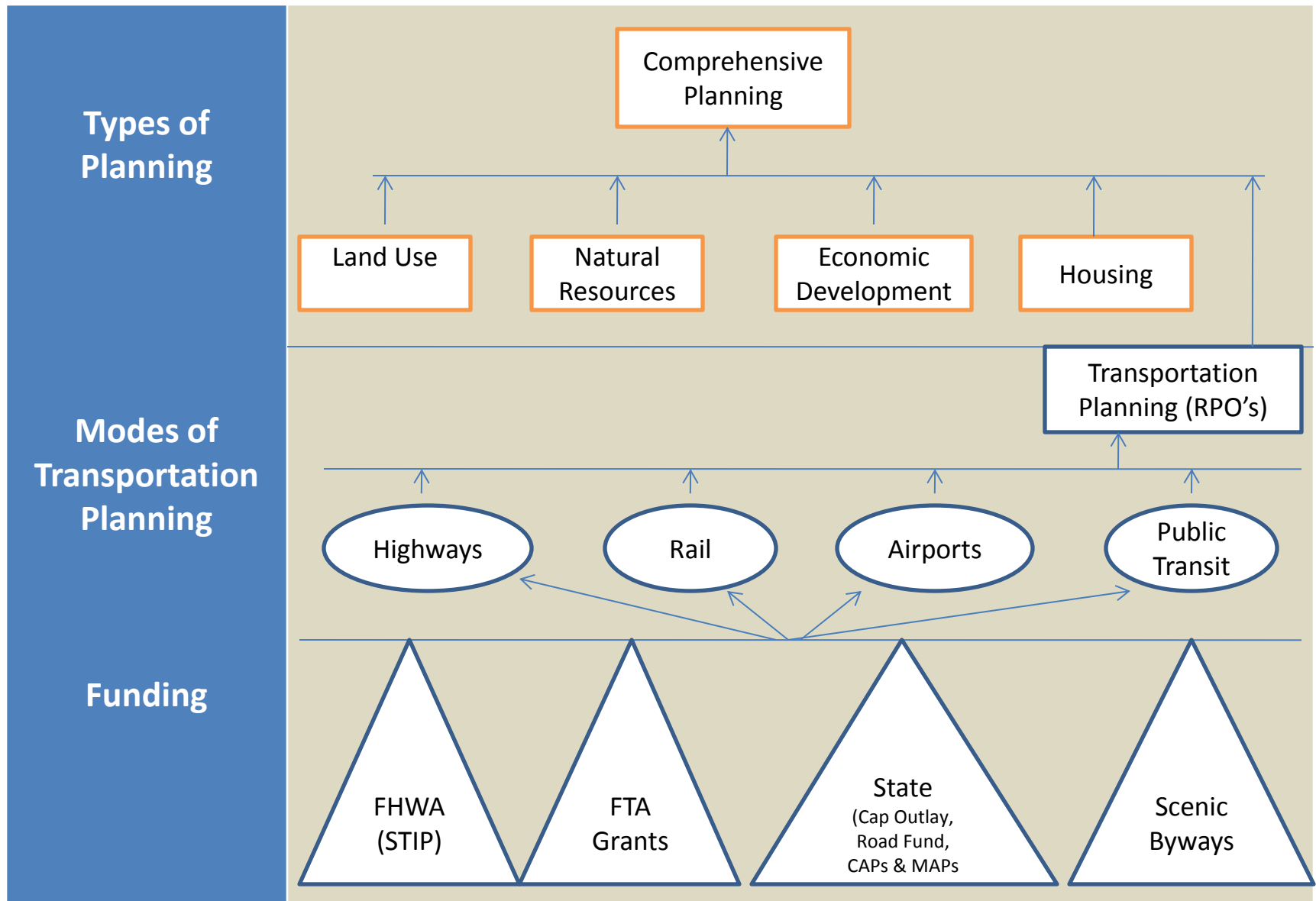


### 3. How does the R.T.P.O. support funding flow and local project implementation?

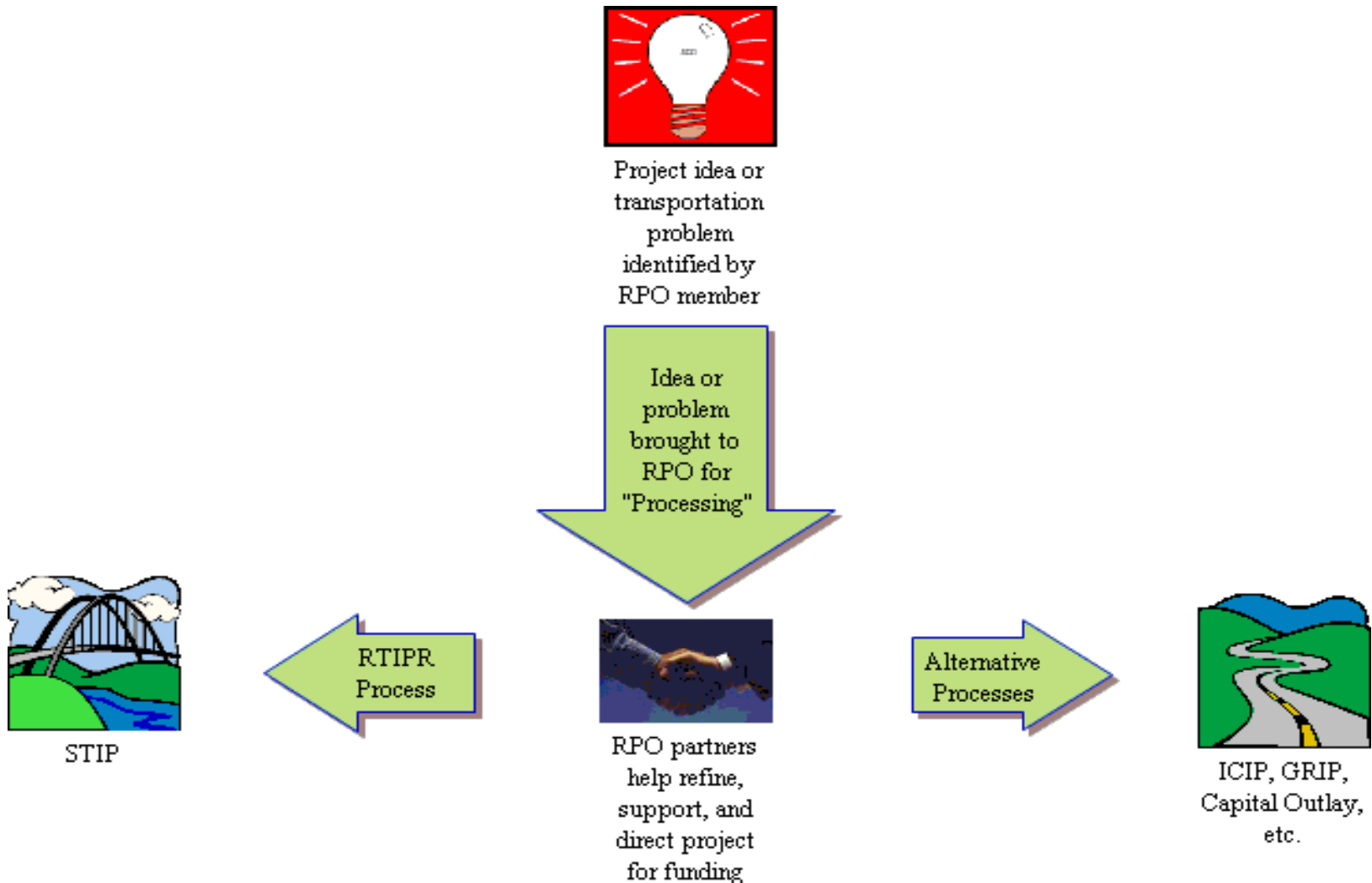
- The N.W.R.T.P.O. convenes the Technical Committee on a monthly basis to report, **track and plan funding and project development**. **Once each year** the RTPO – TC **reviews new Project Identification Forms** (PIF's) that can be submitted from member governments throughout the year, and add them to an ongoing list of projects cited in the RTIPR (*Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations*). The RTPO – TC then **ranks and prioritizes all the projects** – both new and ongoing - in a variety of funding categories **within the RTIPR**, to provide DOT a list of **equitably prioritized** (by *consensus of all members*) projects for inclusion in the STIP (*Statewide Transportation Improvement Program*). These can commence as funding becomes available each year through the N.M. Dept. of Transportation. **Highest ranking projects are not always funded first** – sometimes other listed projects become more competitive by achieving a stronger collection of matching funding making project readiness for commencement to completion more likely. For this reason, the RTPO supports member governments by also **seeking and informing** representatives about a wide variety of **funding opportunities** as they arise and become available from a variety of sources. *Refer to the flow chart for funding from the Federal Govt. through the State, to the region.*
- Examples of the NWRTPO's pursuit of other funding sources – some on our own, and some in collaboration with the other RPO's statewide, include:
  - ongoing support to increase regional collaboration to improve and expand **public transportation resources** , services and connectivity
  - **Scenic Byways**: Development of a Corridor Management Plan and pursuit of nomination for federal designation of the Trail of the Ancients as a national scenic byway , along with applications for byway funding each year
  - Participation in and marketing for the August 2008 N.M. First **Transportation Finance Town Hall**, and ongoing support and advocacy for the Town Hall report recommendations as well as **HM-35 / HM-5 / HM-9 legislative committees** supporting increased **transportation revenue streams**.
  - Participation in responding efficiently, equitably and effectively to the recent series of federal stimulus package opportunities (**ARRA – TIGER funding**; and **other funding opportunities** from state or federal sources



# Funding Streams through the RTPO that contribute toward local comprehensive planning:



# **N.W.R.T.P.O. process for supporting local member governments for the development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure**



## 4. What are some of the N.W.R.T.P.O.'s accomplishments?

*(with support / collaboration from the N.W.N.M. Council of Governments and other consultants as needed)*

- **General Accomplishments & Support the NWRTPO provides each year or periodically:**
  - Leverage resources to help grow projects that otherwise would not have been accomplished
  - Facilitate formal partnership agreements and collaboration between municipal, county and tribal governance and NM-DOT
  - Develop and coordinate support for public transportation services
  - Conduct and assist with major rural transportation research studies for our region, and inform on resource opportunities
  - Help achieve strengthened recognition in state policy on behalf of member governments (“collective bargaining impact”)
  - Dev. & facilitated two Road Forums on behalf of McKinley Navajo Chapters supporting better project development
  - Support for local projects – NM-118 expansion, US-491, Laguna Trails project, Gallup Allison Corridor, Acoma ARRA road reconstruction project, McKinley County Road 19, Grants Johnson Street, Milan Uranium Ave., US-64 Chapter intersections, and many more
  - The NWRTPO originated a request to DOT-LTAP for intensive project development training, which is now developed and periodically offered around the state to benefit effective and efficient project development and fiscal constraint.
- **Public Transportation:**
  - Completed a feasibility study on the formation of a Regional Transit District for NWNM with consultant support
  - Periodic technical assistance for public transportation studies, and helping individual transit providers find ways to better coordinate routes, and share resources
- **Scenic Byways:**
  - Completed a Corridor Management Plan and application for federal designation as a national scenic byway with consultant support for the Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway
  - Completed annual funding applications for the Trail of the Ancients and Route 66 Scenic Byways
  - Participation and collaboration with the states of Utah, Colorado and Arizona for a four-state national byway corridor, and a Geo-Tourism Mapping Project with National Geographic Magazine inviting international tourism to our region
- **Support for Transportation Legislation:**
  - Provided statewide leadership support for development and implementation of the N.M. First Transportation Finance Town Hall held in August, 2008
  - Provided statewide leadership in collaboration with the other RPO's in building public awareness for HM-35 , HM-5, and HM-9 legislation supporting increasing financial support for transportation infrastructure, as well as elevating the awareness of RTPOs at major state conference events. Provided support for the HM-9 Committee's Public Awareness and polling drive
  - Provided support and coordination for our member governments to respond efficiently, equitably and effectively to federal stimulus package (ARRA) TIGER \$ opportunities in collaboration with the state legislature and N.M. Dept. of Transportation

**Northwest RTPO  
GENERAL ROSTER**

Updated 9/12/13

| Entity   | Technical Committee Representative   | Technical Committee Alternates/Associates |
|--|--|---|
| <b>LOCAL/TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS [VOTING MEMBERS]</b> |  |   |
| Cibola County                                    | Anna Larson, Judy Horacek  | 285-2570                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:alarson@co.cibola.nm.us">alarson@co.cibola.nm.us</a>               |   |
| McKinley County                                  | Jeff Irving, Anthony Dimas   | 722-3868                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:jirving@co.mckinley.nm.us">jirving@co.mckinley.nm.us</a>           |   |
| San Juan County                                  | T.J. Richards  | 334-4500                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:trichards@sjcounty.net">trichards@sjcounty.net</a>                 |   |
| Gallup   | Stan Henderson (Vice-Chair)  | 863-1290                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:pubwrks@ci.gallup.nm.us">pubwrks@ci.gallup.nm.us</a>               |   |
| Grants   | John Montoya, Jim Fisk   | 348-4000                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:john.montoya@wilsonco.com">john.montoya@wilsonco.com</a>           |   |
| Milan  | Jack Moleres, Andy Quintana  | 285-6694                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:publicworks@villageofmilan.com">publicworks@villageofmilan.com</a> |   |
| Navajo Nation                                    | Larry Ute Joe, Dexter Donald, Margie Begay   | 368-1552                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:ljoe@navajodot.org">ljoe@navajodot.org</a>                         |   |
| Pueblo of Acoma                                  | Raymond Concho, Jr., Monica Felipe   | 552-6604                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:rjconchojr@puebloofacoma.org">rjconchojr@puebloofacoma.org</a>     |   |
| Pueblo of Laguna                                 | Dave Duetsawe, Ray Lucero  | 552-1224                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:dduetsawe@lagunatribe.org">dduetsawe@lagunatribe.org</a>           |   |
| Pueblo of Zuni                                   | Royce Gchachu (Chair)  | 782-7116                                  |
|  | <a href="mailto:rghach@ashiwi.org">rghach@ashiwi.org</a>                           |   |
|  | First name is voting member, second name(s) is alternate                           |   |

## Northwest RTPO Affiliate Members/Guests

|                                 |   |  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Farmington MPO                  | Joe Delmagori   | <a href="mailto:jdelmagori@fmtn.org">jdelmagori@fmtn.org</a>               |
|                                 | Duane Wakan   | <a href="mailto:dwakan@fmtn.org">dwakan@fmtn.org</a>                       |
| Catron County                   | Cerisse Grijalva  | <a href="mailto:grijalvac1@swnmcog.org">grijalvac1@swnmcog.org</a>         |
| Sandoval County                 | Valerie Hermanson   | <a href="mailto:vhermanson@mrcog-nm.gov">vhermanson@mrcog-nm.gov</a>       |
| NM Economic Development Dep't   | Ruben Fragoso   | <a href="mailto:Rubeni.fragoso@state.nm.us">Rubeni.fragoso@state.nm.us</a> |
| Ramah Navajo                    | Andrew Gallegos   | <a href="mailto:agallegos@ramahnavajo.org">agallegos@ramahnavajo.org</a>   |
| <b>Northwest RTPO Staff</b>     |   |  |
| RTPO Planner                    | Bob Kuipers   | <a href="mailto:rkuipers@nwnmcog.com">rkuipers@nwnmcog.com</a>             |
| Executive                       | Jeff Kiely, Executive Director –<br>Evan Williams, Deputy Director -<br>NWNM Council Of Governments |  |
| Planning Support                | Prestene Garnenez   |  |
| Office Support                  | Bebe Sarmiento, Teresa Mecale, Martina Whitmore,  |  |
|                                 |   |  |
| <b>NMDOT Staff</b>              |   |  |
| NMDOT Planning/GTG Unit         | Brian Degani  | Anne McLaughlin, Jessica Griffin   |
| NMDOT Tribal Liaison            | Ron Shutiva   |  |
| NMDOT Central Regional Division | Mark Fahey  |  |
| District 6                      | Larry Maynard   | Jeff Sanchez   |
|                                 |   | Anthony Griego   |
|                                 |   | Bryan Peters, Joann Garcia   |
| District 5                      | Miguel Gabaldon, Jr.  | Chris Urioste  |
|                                 | Phil Gallegos   | David Quintana, William Alexander  |
|                                 |   |  |

## 5. Funding for now and the future: *According to the HM-35 report:*

- 15% of state highways and 16% of state bridges are currently in poor condition
- vehicle crashes on New Mexico roads and highways are estimated at \$3 billion / yr. In human & economic cost
- N.M. – D.O.T.'s purchasing power is 23% lower than it was in 1987
- primary problem: revenue for transportation infrastructure is not keeping up with the escalating inflation of construction and maintenance costs!

### HM-35 proposed legislation:

Continued through HM-5, and HM-9 Committee

| Short Term Solutions:  | Potential annual revenue in millions: |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>1) Redirect existing transportation revenue sources back to transportation purposes (all or %):</b>   |                                       |
| a) Dedicate motor vehicle excise tax back to transportation ( <i>adjusts with inflation</i> )  | \$136                                 |
| b) Dedicate gross receipts tax on NMDOT contractors back to transportation   | \$14                                  |
| c) Stronger enforcement / compliance for weight-distance and trip tax  | \$19                                  |
| <b>2) Create 9 new revenue sources by increasing taxes from a) transportation sources or b) non-trans. sources and dedicate to transportation:</b> |                                       |
| a) Increase state GRT by 25 cents and dedicate to transportation   | \$121                                 |

### N.M. First Town Hall Report Recommendations:

#### Public Awareness:

- Present a comprehensive plan for implementing transportation priorities reflective of unmet needs, underserved populations, and innovative technologies.
- Conduct an education campaign that informs local communities of the costs and benefits of a sustainable transportation system.

#### Partnerships:

- Ensure future residential and commercial developments align demands and resources through state/local government partnerships and technical assistance (*smart growth*)
- Enable public/private partnerships to identify and implement beneficial projects.

#### Transportation Revenues for Transportation Projects:

- Spend transportation-related revenues on transportation needs and redirect currently diverted funds
- Ensure equitable allocation of costs to users and taxpayers by redirecting gross receipts taxes on transportation projects to support transportation needs.

## Funding for now and the future continued:

### HM-35 proposed legislation:

Continued through HM-5 and HM-9 Committee

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| b) Charge a 5% GRT on gasoline sales  | \$116        |
| c) Charge a 5% GRT on special fuel sales<br>( <i>diesel and other</i> )                                 | \$78         |
| d) Increase vehicle registration fees ( <i>calibrate by axle weight = average \$69 – all vehicles</i> ) | \$122        |
| e) Authorize local GRT option ( <i>yield varies widely</i> )  | \$ ??        |
| f) Index gas tax (@ current 17 cent rate) -3%=<br>(6%= \$60 m/yr)                                       | \$25         |
| g) Index special fuels (@ current 21 cent rate) -3%=<br>(6%= \$76 m/yr)                                 | \$31         |
| h) Index vehicle registration fees—3% current rate=<br>(6% = \$46 m/yr)                                 | \$19         |
| i) Index weight-distance & trip tax - 3% “ “ rate=<br>(6% = \$60 m/yr)                                  | \$25         |
| <b>TOTAL ANNUAL YEILD IN MILLIONS – COMBINED :</b>  | <b>\$706</b> |

### Long Term Solutions:

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1) Impose a state VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled) Fee @ 1.9 cents with a 6% annual inflation adjustment: | \$240 |
| 2) Offer a local option VMT fee ( <i>yield varies</i> )   |       |

## N.M. First Town Hall Report

### Recommendations:

#### Short Term Funding Options:

- Increase transportation infrastructure funding by redirecting the current motor vehicle excise tax to the state road fund.
- Establish a state transit fund by increasing the motor vehicle excise tax.

#### Long Term Funding Options:

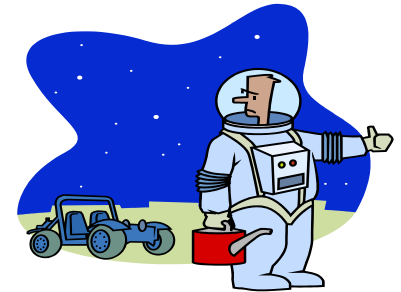
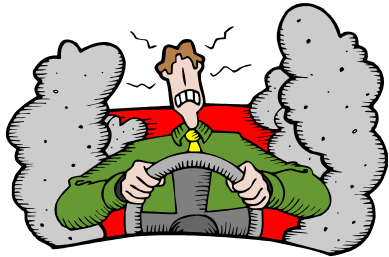
- Index \* specific transportation revenue sources to account for inflation.
- Create a permanent transportation trust fund that can be drawn on in the future for transportation needs.
- Continue to evaluate the funding options in House Memorial 35.

(\* - indexing means adjusting the tax rate or fee over time to account for the effects of inflation)



## The Bottom Line:

*“Universal Health Care is a great thing, but if you can’t get to the Doctor’s office, it doesn’t matter. Education is a huge issue, but if you can’t get kids to school, it doesn’t matter. Transportation is a fundamental element of services delivered to the public. If we fail to keep our transportation infrastructure from meeting the needs of our public; our American way of life will change and we will become a Third World Country.” (quote from a DOT District Engineer)*



*“Our **unity as a nation** is sustained by free communication of thought and by easy transportation of people and goods. Together the **unifying forces of our communication and transportation systems** are dynamic elements in the very name we bear – United States. Without them, we would be a mere alliance of many separate parts.” - - President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1955*

## Contacts:

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
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