



Meeting Minutes

Northern Pueblos Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO)
Regular meeting hosted on June 1, 2022 (online).

NPRTPO Voting Members and Alternates

Name	Entity	Title	Present/Absent
Eric Martinez	Los Alamos County	Voting Member	Absent
Eric Ulibarri	Los Alamos County	Alternate	Absent
Keith Wilson	Los Alamos County	Alternate	Present
Napoleon Garcia	Rio Arriba County	Voting Member	Present
Cathy Martinez	Rio Arriba County	Alternate	Present
Robert Griego	Santa Fe County	Voting Member	Absent
Gary Brett Clavio	Santa Fe County	Alternate	Present
Candyce O'Donnell (Chair)	Taos County	Voting Member	Present
Jason Silva	Taos County	Alternate	Present
Muhammad A. Hussain	City of Española	Voting Member	Absent
Elijah Mares	City of Española	Alternate	Absent
Patrick Nicholson	Village of Taos Ski Valley	Voting Member	Present
Anthony Martinez	Village of Taos Ski Valley	Alternate	Absent
John Avila	Village of Taos Ski Valley	Alternate	Absent
French Espinoza	Town of Taos	Voting Member	Absent
Lynda Perry	Town of Taos	Alternate	Absent
Linda Calhoun	Town of Red River	Voting Member	Present
Georgiana Rael	Town of Red River	Alternate	Present
Maggie Valdez	Village of Chama	Voting Member	Absent
Will Donohoe	Village of Chama	Alternate	Absent
Brent Jaramillo	Village of Questa	Voting Member	Absent
Jason Gonzalez	Village of Questa	Alternate	Present
Paul Castillo	Jicarilla Apache Nation	Voting Member	Absent
Kathryn Valdez	Jicarilla Apache Nation	Alternate	Present
Marcus Lopez	Pueblo of Nambé	Voting Member	Absent
Levi Valdez	Pueblo of Nambé	Alternate	Absent
Sylvia Armijo	Picuris Pueblo	Voting Member	Present
	Picuris Pueblo	Alternate	Absent
	Pueblo of San Ildefonso	Voting Member	Absent
Lillian Garcia	Pueblo of San Ildefonso	Alternate	Absent
Christy Ladd	Ohkay Owingeh	Voting Member	Present
Sybil Cota	Ohkay Owingeh	Alternate	Absent
Suzette Shije	Pueblo of Santa Clara	Voting Member	Present
	Pueblo of Santa Clara	Alternate	Absent
Vernon Lujan (Vice Chair)	Pueblo of Taos	Voting Member	Present
Reva Suazo	Pueblo of Taos	Alternate	Absent
Randy Vigil	Pueblo of Pojoaque	Voting Member	Absent
Janay Chavarria	Pueblo of Pojoaque	Alternate	Absent
Anthony Mortillaro	NCRTD	Voting Member	Present
Bryce Gibson	NCRTD	Alternate	Present



NCNMEDD/NPRTPO Staff

Christopher Madrid	Community Development Director
Paul Sittig	Transportation Planner
Kyla Danforth	Transportation Intern

NMDOT Staff

Ron Shutiva	NMDOT Tribal Liaison
John Neunuebel	NMDOT Urban & Regional Planner
James Mexia	NMDOT District 5 Technical Support Engineer
Amanda Niño	NMDOT D5 Local Government Road Fund Coordinator
Joe Sanchez	NMDOT D5 Native American Services Director

Guests

Arlando Teller	U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs
Dominic Martinez	Village of Questa, Village Administrator

I. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Candyce O’Donnell, Taos County, called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair O’Donnell called on Chris Madrid, NCNMEDD, to lead the pledge of allegiance.

III. Opening Prayer

Chair O’Donnell asked U.S. DOT Deputy Assistant Director Arlando Teller to lead the opening prayer.

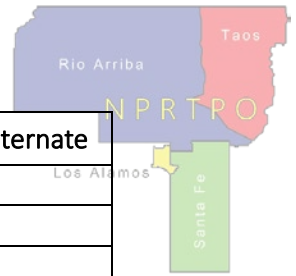
IV. Welcome and Introductions/Public Comments:

Chair O’Donnell welcomed everyone, and individuals listed above introduced themselves. Ron Shutiva, NMDOT, noted that this day, June 1, 2022, is the first day of the annual Tribal Leaders Summit, being held at the Sandia Casino. Governor Lujan Grisham is on the agenda for tomorrow, June 2nd. Mr. Shutiva noted he would have to leave at 11 AM to attend a virtual Tribal consultation on environmental issues and cultural resources, hosted by FHWA.

V. Roll Call:

Chair O’Donnell called on Paul Sittig, NCNMEDD, to conduct the roll call.

Name	Entity	Voting Member or Alternate
Keith Wilson	Los Alamos County	Voting Member
Cathy Martinez	Rio Arriba County	Alternate
Gary Brett Clavio	Santa Fe County	Alternate
Candyce O’Donnell, Chair	Taos County	Voting Member



Name	Entity	Voting Member or Alternate
Patrick Nicholson	Village of Taos Ski Valley	Voting Member
Linda Calhoun	Town of Red River	Voting Member
Jason Gonzalez	Village of Questa	Alternate
Kathryn Valdez	Jicarilla Apache Nation	Alternate
Sylvia Armijo	Picuris Pueblo	Voting Member
Christy Ladd	Ohkay Owingeh	Voting Member
Suzette Shije	Pueblo of Santa Clara	Voting Member
Bryce Gibson	NCRTD	Alternate

Mr. Sittig confirmed that there was a quorum for the meeting.

VI. Approval of the Agenda:

Chair O’Donnell made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Patrick Nicholson, Village of Taos Ski Valley. Chair O’Donnell asked for a voice vote or a show of hands, with all in favor.

VII. Approval of the Minutes: May 4, 2022, Regular Meeting (online)

Chair O’Donnell made a motion to approve the minutes with the very last sentence, to change “Secretary” to “Chair”. Seconded by Keith Wilson, Los Alamos County. Chair O’Donnell asked for a voice vote or a show of hands, with all in favor.

VIII. Listening session: U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs, Arlando Teller

Chair O’Donnell introduced Deputy Assistant Secretary Teller, who shared his contact information (cell: 202-770-9255; email: Arlando.teller@dot.gov), and stated his role is to maximize opportunities to improve Tribal transportation connectivity across the modes (roads, bridges, airports, transit). Deputy Assistant Secretary Teller stressed the generational opportunities available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and he highlighted the desire for an increase in rural transit that heard at the New Mexico Rural Summit. DAS Teller noted that there is a significant increase for non-Tribal rural transit funding, and that non-Tribal rural communities should [reach out to the Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\) to learn more](#). He also noted that the BIA is supporting the recently released [Rural EV Toolkit](#) from U.S. DOT, and that the BIE fleet is being changed over to alternate fuel vehicles to show the federal commitment to transportation energy transition, and show how these vehicles can work in rural, Tribal communities.

DAS Teller offered to connect people who have questions on a range of topics, including federal funding like Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), a nationally competitive funding opportunity that requires a 20% match, which is a barrier for Tribal and non-



Tribal communities. This matter is being discussed in D.C. between the policy group and the Office of General Counsel, to open federal funding opportunities.

DAS Teller stated that the Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) centers would be re-established in seven regions around the U.S., instead of being centralized in Washington D.C. as they were under the prior administration. Additionally, the Office of Tribal Affairs has been raised to the Deputy Assistant Secretary level, which amplifies the voices of Tribes and Indian Nations. Tribal Transportation Self-Governance is being established with the first Tribe soon, and another is in the queue from New Mexico.

DAS Teller noted that he has been working closely with the White House Council on Native American Affairs, with his U.S. DOT Office for Tribal Affairs being the U.S. DOT point of contact in the Energy, Economic Development, and Infrastructure Committee discussions. As part of that work, DAS Teller has completed four deliverables to the White House:

- Tribal Aviation Symposium (March 2022)
- Electric Vehicle Toolkit (February 2022)
- Safety campaigns throughout the southwest and northwest (June 2021)
- Hire Local campaign (ongoing)
 - Extended from vocational positions to construction management, architects, engineers, lawyers in Indian Country

DAS Teller provided links to notices of funding opportunities (NOFOs):

- U.S. DOT Upcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity Announcements in 2022 – <https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/upcoming-notice-funding-opportunity-announcements-2022>
- U.S. DOT Funding Opportunities – <https://www.transportation.gov/rural/funding-opportunities>
- FHWA’s Emergency Relief Program should there be a nexus to damaged roads and bridges – <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/erelief.cfm>

DAS Teller noted concerns from Tribes include:

- Time required to check for NOFOs
- Need for grant-writing capacity, in-office or hired
- Having budget for match, or an option for match waivers
- Benefit/Cost Analysis (BCA) development, including necessary data
- Particularly in the west, “rural” doesn’t mean suburbs outside of an urban center

The U.S. DOT policy section is considering these concerns. DAS Teller is advocating for Indian Country and rural communities with his Tribal Affairs team, which currently consists of himself and two others, with more staff to be hired in the near future.

Chair O’Donnell asked Ron Shutiva, NMDOT Tribal Liaison, to open the listening session portion of today’s meeting. Mr. Shutiva noted he will organize a new Tribal Safety Summit and a separate Tribal Transportation Roundtable with Tribal transportation planners to discuss and address the Tribal needs. Mr. Shutiva will reach out to DAS



Teller for possible coordination and support. Mr. Shutiva noted that some Tribes have a difficulty with federal projects when a match requirement is included, and that federal and state Tribal funding allocations are insufficient to address the needs. He noted that some Tribes were successful in applying for the state Transportation Project Fund (TPF) match waiver. Mr. Shutiva noted that the prior “cradle to grave” trainings offered in coordination between NMDOT, Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), and TTAP were beneficial and could be offered again to support project planning and management.

DAS Teller noted that two of his White House deliverables for 2023 are in process now, being the Tribal Transit Symposium, a two-day virtual meeting to have convene Tribes with transit agencies or operations and the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) to identify challenges and suggest improvements. The second is a suggestion for a two-day training for Tribal entities to inform them of all the funding opportunities that are coming up, including both the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and other funding sources. The agenda would clearly identify what grant or funding opportunity is to be discussed at what time. This meeting would take place in October or November 2022, at the start of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023, to help Tribes prepare for the upcoming calls for projects. DAS Teller stated that [Executive Order 13175, “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments,” has been renewed](#) and updated to include an executive waiver that can be suggested when a Tribe has showcased hardship, providing an opportunity for review of applicability to the specific grant. DAS Teller also noted that Tribes can review [23 USC 120 \(j\) and \(k\)](#) with the Tribes’ attorneys general.

Vernon Lujan, Taos Pueblo, thanked DAS Teller for his attendance to the meeting, and noted that most of the Tribes in New Mexico could qualify for hardship status, particularly with the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Lujan also noted that the increasing transportation project costs are stressing the resources of Tribes. Ensuring that emergency response vehicles can reach residents, in addition to the daily access needs for the Tribal members, can be a challenge with dirt and gravel roads.

DAS Teller recognized the challenge for project funding with escalating costs. He also noted that people in rural areas have the longest commute and pay the most for their transportation, issues that are also recognized by Secretary Buttigieg. Rural school buses have long distances to travel to pick up students. Safety is also a consideration for those living in rural areas.

Christy Ladd, Ohkay Owingeh, said that the Pueblo submitted the paperwork for self-governance a few months ago and asked DAS Teller if he could assist in moving the effort forward. Ms. Ladd also asked if DAS Teller knew the status of the TTAP Center applications.

Amanda Niño, NMDOT D5 Local Government Road Fund Coordinator, stated she is writing award letters for projects (*clarification: Ms. Niño later confirmed she was reviewing FY 2023 TPF projects at this time, but award letters would not be out until early September 2022*).



DAS Teller recognized Ms. Ladd’s proactive work at Ohkay Owingeh, and said he would check with his staff, though the paperwork might still be with their Office of General Council. If that is the case, he will ask for review timelines and follow up.

Suzette Shije, Santa Clara Pueblo, suggested a federal funding guide or summary to help identify whether it is suitable to pursue funding opportunities, particularly with consideration of the match requirements and options for in-kind matches or possible funding waivers. In-kind matches pose other challenges, and even if TTP is possible as a match, those funds might already be programmed in the Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP) for another project. Also, if a Tribe has funds that are not yet obligated, they might be identified for partial funding of a future project, rather than being idle as they might appear. Ms. Shije thanked DAS Teller for attending this and other meetings, and she thanked him for his responsiveness to prior inquiries.

DAS Teller recognized the challenges with identifying matching funding, as TTP funds are programmed for multiple years through the TTIP. He also noted that the inability to use TTP as match is an issue for Tribal Nations of all sizes, and one that might require discussion with the Tribal Nations, state representatives and congressional delegation to enact necessary changes. DAS Teller also suggested informing the congressional delegation before submitting federal applications so they’re aware of the project interest before the deadline. And if your project is not approved for funding, reach out to your congressional delegation to get a debrief on how to improve the project with the grant evaluators.

Sylvia Armijo, Picuris Pueblo, welcomed DAS Teller to the meeting, and agreed with the issues raised by the other Pueblos. Ms. Armijo echoed Ms. Shije’s comment on banking TTP funds to fully fund a project. Ms. Armijo noted that Picuris Pueblo has a smoke shop and now a travel center as revenue generators, but because they’re located on a more tourist-used route than a major roadway, these don’t generate significant funds for the Tribe. Picuris relies on federal funding to operate their programs, and the Tribal funds are spread thin. Ms. Armijo noted she is concerned there won’t be sufficient funding for her position through the end of the year, and she asked for help for the Tribal and non-Tribal communities. Ms. Armijo also echoed DAS Teller’s comment on how challenging the Cost Benefit Analysis is for project applications, particularly as Picuris has no police service of its own and BIA Police rarely travel to the area, so safety data is hard to come by.

DAS Teller noted there’s also a concern about equity of TTP funding, supporting the smaller Tribes, but changes to that requires an act by Congress. DAS Teller noted that Senators Luján and Heinrich are pushing for change, and they need to hear additional support for these changes.

Chair O’Donnell asked Mr. Sittig to draft a resolution for the Congressional Delegation, Governor Lujan Grisham, and DAS Teller.



Joe Sanchez, NMDOT District 5, recognized DAS Teller for his perseverance with seeing that issues are addressed for Tribal Nations and rural communities. Mr. Sanchez asked about the misalignment between Census tracts, Tribal populations and enrollment.

DAS Teller thanked Mr. Sanchez for the kind words and said that the Tribe's sovereignty numbers are the most important to submit. DAS Teller also asked rural communities to submit their issues and concerns to him, as rural and Tribal communities' needs and issues go hand in hand, supporting safe transportation, connectivity, funding, and other opportunities that address equity for small communities.

Chair O'Donnell noted that Taos County was preparing to apply for the Rural grant funding for the Pilar bridge across the Rio Grande, but they were ineligible because they did not have design ready to go. Jason Silva, Taos County, noted that the Rural grant stated that projects should be shovel-ready, but used different definitions, and prohibited use of funds for design or land acquisition. Additionally, the 20% match was a hurdle for an \$11 million project, especially when Taos County is allocated \$750,000 for all their road projects. While the bridge is being renovated, this is only allowing additional time to find another source of funds to replace the bridge. Looking ahead to funding opportunities that might have low to no match requirements, the project would be more feasible, but with any significant match requirement the project is not viable.

DAS Teller asked Mr. Silva and Mr. Sanchez to submit a summary of the project that was submitted, the challenges faced, and the concerns faced by the County. Mr. Silva noted that he did not submit the application due to the appearance that the project would not be eligible due to lack of design. DAS Teller asked Mr. Silva to send a project summary and he would reach out to the program managers to inform them that Taos County was taxed by addressing the largest fire in the country and ask for the application to be considered.

Chair O'Donnell said that it was unlikely that any member of Northern Pueblos RTPO applied for the Rural grant funding due to the uncertainty in the language and the match requirement. She asked if DAS Teller could support workforce training with the Tribes to support local capacity for developing contracting and subcontracting capacity for road projects, to start new businesses and hire local people to build the projects.

DAS Teller said he was honored to attend the meeting and support the Tribal and rural communities, supporting and advocating where communities cannot due to lack of local time or capacity. Additionally, he informs communities of funding opportunities and provide clarity where official guidance or requests for projects are vague. DAS Teller suggested that the RTPO members send him a letter with the concerns expressed today, regarding:

- Waiver requirements for Tribal and rural communities throughout NM;
- Concerns regarding cost containment and inflation, and how they adversely affect the ability to fulfil local projects;
- Limited funding in TTP that challenges transportation connectivity; and
- Local workforce training.



DAS Teller suggested that such a letter also be directed to the congressional delegation to further support these issues.

Chair O’Donnell thanked DAS Teller for this suggestion and invited him to return in October or November for a similar conversation. DAS Teller asked for an invitation, which would give him an opportunity to speak to the items addressed and activities that still need work. Chair O’Donnell thanked Christopher Madrid, NCNMEDD, for organizing DAS Teller’s attendance to this meeting, and asked Mr. Madrid to work with DAS Teller to coordinate again for October 2022.

IX. Approval/discussion: Finalize FY 2023 TPF Ranking, review next steps

Paul Sittig presented a table of the preliminarily prioritized FY 2023 Transportation Project Fund (TPF) projects, based on members’ ratings of projects.

Project Rating	Project Score (Avg.)	Requestor	Route Number/ Name	Length	Project Cost
1	37.69	NCRTD	NM-68	N/A	\$ 426,161.88
2	37.08	Los Alamos	Loma Linda Dr., La Tierra Rd., La Mirada Cir.	2,550 ft (0.48 mi)	\$ 2,410,000.00
3	37	Taos Ski Valley	Twining Road	4850 lf	\$ 7,837,188.00
4	36.85	Taos County	Rio Chiquito Bridge (NMDOT rated poor)	0.05 mi	\$ 1,000,000.00
5	36.62	Los Alamos	Rose Street	0.30 mi	\$ 2,500,000.00
6	35.77	Taos Pueblo	Lucero Road	1.268 mi	\$ 794,865.30
7	34.77	Taos County	Blueberry Hill Road	4.8 mi	\$ 11,000,000.00
8	33.85	Taos County	Leo Valencia Road	0.15 mi	\$ 1,000,000.00
9	33.62	Red River	High Street	7,442 lf	\$ 8,000,000.00
10	32.38	Española	NM 583/ Fairview	2 miles	\$ 5,250,000.00
11	29.38	Jicarilla Apache Ntn	Medicine Way	666.67 lf	\$ 775,000.00
12	29.38	Santa Clara Pueblo	Puye Road	1,000 feet	\$ 500,000.00
13	27.38	Town of Taos	Camio del Medio	1.1 miles	\$ 1,412,000.00
14	20.54	Taos County	Tom Holder Road	0.5 mi	\$ 210,000.00
Total					\$ 43,115,215.18

(Note: a partial table is included here for ease of review; termini, scope of work, and additional notes are included in the official ranked list of projects)



Mr. Sittig noted that he submitted the completed FY 2023 TPF application packets to NMDOT along with the preliminary ranking of projects.

Keith Wilson, Los Alamos County, asked Mr. Sittig to send the completed packets that were submitted if signed PFFs were provided by NMDOT District 5. Mr. Sittig confirmed that he would send out final packets to members.

Chair O'Donnell asked for a motion to approve the prioritized list as presented. Keith Wilson, Los Alamos County, made the motion. Patrick Nicholson, Village of Taos Ski Valley, seconded the motion. Chair O'Donnell asked for a voice vote or a show of hands, with all in favor.

X. Review, Approval: FFY 2023-2024 Regional Work Program

Chair O'Donnell, noting the time, asked for a motion to postpone Item 10 until the next meeting. Linda Calhoun, Town of Red River made the motion. Second by Bret Clavio, Santa Fe County.

Keith Wilson, Los Alamos County, asked if this was a time-sensitive matter. Paul Sittig, NCNMEDD, noted that the draft is due to NMDOT today, June 1, 2022, but this is an ongoing discussion with NMDOT and does not need action today.

Chair O'Donnell asked for a voice vote or a show of hands, with all in favor.

XI. New Business

Chair O'Donnell noted that due to the COVID-19 surge, the next few meetings would be online, and members would reconsider in-person meetings at future meetings.

A. Upcoming meeting locations and topics

July 6 – online; Bylaws update and Open Meetings Act resolution; Northern Pueblos Regional Transportation Plan update; FFY 2023-24 RWP

Aug. 3 – online; Alternative bidding, project management (tentative)

B. Other items from NPRTPO members or the public

No additional items raised.

XII. Adjourn

Chair O'Donnell adjourned the meeting at 11:47 AM.