



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie advocates for
improvement of the Nation's transportation systems**

GALLUP, N.M. – Last Wednesday, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) met with the New Mexico Department of Transportation Regional Working Group 4 to discuss a Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Currently, there are seven Regional Working Groups assigned to develop a Regional Transportation Plan in coordination with NMDOT to create a statewide, regional, and metropolitan plan to build an efficient transportation system by the year 2040.

The key components of this planning scope involve the data and needs of existing plans of transportation, the current supply and demand of transportation, the performance and statewide strategies of transportation infrastructure, and services and programs throughout the region.

Delegate Yazzie said the most challenging aspect on the New Mexico side is getting the local chapters to become certified which would enable the chapters to receive funds from the State, expediting the improvement process.

“If the chapters become certified, they will be entitled to be 110% reliable on running their chapter on their own instead of depending on Window Rock but it has been a big challenge for our chapters to do that. The multi-jurisdictional complexity and bureaucratic issues weighs down the entire process of trying to get transportation systems met,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

The majority of those in attendance agreed that there were many cross-jurisdictional collaborations among all entities and that all jurisdictions need to be on the same page when improving roads in rural communities.

“It is reflective in Council Delegate Yazzie’s point that in his case the decision-making is never local enough. All these decisions are going one way and the ‘so-called’ revenues for improvement are not happening,” stated executive director Jeffrey G. Kiely, of Northwest NM Council of Governments.

Another challenge is obtaining funding to implement transportation infrastructure, services, and programs throughout the state.

“Even though we may never have the money to do all these projects, we are still planning. We are still planning because we have to, legally. Otherwise, we are giving in. The point is, that this is an ongoing challenge,” stated Tim Karpoff, owner of Karpoff & Associates.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Regional Working Groups agreed to meet again in May or June to discuss a state wide plan that will develop more goals on transportation systems.

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