





## Nevada Department of Transportation

### Board of Directors • Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020

9:30 A.M.

---

Governor Sisolak extended his own welcome and said he appreciated Mr. Ascuaga's willingness to participate and serve.

Mr. Ascuaga thanked the Governor and said the onboarding process was exciting and he was learning a lot. He said he looked forward to working with everyone.

Director Swallow continued with her Director's Report with the Department's prime focus: safety. The Director said last year was a good year because every single presentation she did she was able to say they were tracking better than the previous year.

Unfortunately, that it not the case this year, and already fatalities are tracking higher than last year. There have been 24 fatalities so far this year compared to 22 last year, and that includes four fatalities in three rural counties that had zero fatalities last year. Pedestrian fatalities are up by 50 percent, with Clark County already double their pedestrian fatalities from last year. Fatalities fluctuate from a year-to-year basis and across the state.

Director Swallow then talked about the INFRA grants. Currently, the Federal Highways USDOT has a request for submittals for INFRA grants. NDOT submitted for three last year and are proposing to submit for two this year. The applications are due at the end of the month. The Department is planning on submitting for the I-15 Tropicana Bridge as well as the US-93 climbing lanes north of I-80.

There is a total of \$906 M available with a minimum of 25 percent of that going to rural projects which is why the Department is looking at doing one submittal in the rural area to hopefully increase chances of one of them being of interest.

On US-93 north of I-80 they have seen a significant increase in truck traffic as economic development has occurred north in Idaho. The traffic is 34 percent trucks on that corridor, compared to only 9 percent on I-15 through the valley. So, it is a significant truck corridor. It's only two lanes, and what they are seeing is that drivers are making risky choices and trying to pass those trucks, often with disastrous results. The Department wants to make sure that they can provide a safe way for them to do that, especially in the climbing areas where the trucks are slower. So, they are requesting \$6M to help offset the \$12M cost on the climbing lanes and they're requesting \$60M to help offset the \$200M total for Tropicana.



## Nevada Department of Transportation

### Board of Directors • Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020

9:30 A.M.

---

Director Swallow said she would be attending the AASHTO Washington Briefing in Washington, D.C. when all of the state DOTs come together to examine shared issues/concerns. They will be specifically looking at:

**FAST Act.** This authorizing language expires this year. The Department will be asking them to re-authorize for a long-term bill, six years, and do it as quickly as possible with as few continuing resolutions as possible. It's really hard to manage the program when there's no certainty of the long-term funding.

They are asking for a robust, long-term bill, one that provides the funding that's necessary for a growing Nevada. Recent transportation bills have provided basically level plus inflation. With the rapid growth in the state they need something more than that; they are asking for them to fund a more robust bill.

They are asking them to allow for flexibility in the formula funds for safety. The Department knows that a lot of the safety incidents on the roads are due to behavior, and if they could flex some of that funding, they might be able to better target the challenges they are having on the roads, things like impaired driving, speeding, et cetera. If they do behavioral programs, they might have better outcomes.

And lastly, they'll be asking them to remove or adjust the mileage cap for designated critical rural freight corridors. There is a Federally funded freight program and those funds can only be applied on the freight network. The challenge is that there's a maximum allowable mileage for non-interstate freight networks, and that is 150 miles per state. They have to figure out which 150 miles would be the critical freight network.

Director Swallow said the Department was getting ready to roll out the Active Traffic Management System. They've entered the final phase of testing on the 42 signs that were installed throughout the Valley. They are located primarily on I-15 between Russell and Washington and on 95 between Valley View and Las Vegas Boulevard. They have put part of the system live so the HOV signs on the left are now live and the speed limit signs on the right are now live. They anticipate the full system will be rolled out by the end of March.

The Director explained the intricacies of the system and how the components work in concert to move traffic through the system in the safest, most efficient manner possible no matter what problems arise. Keeping motorists informed of conditions "downstream" and slowing down overall speed in anticipation of those conditions results in minimizing the chance for secondary collisions. The Director then showed a brief



## Nevada Department of Transportation

### Board of Directors • Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020

9:30 A.M.

---

video in which rice was poured at various rates through funnels into beakers to illustrate the concept that going a little bit slower helps get through the system faster, whether it be just congestion on the road or around an incident.

Director Swallow said they will be working within the next six weeks to share the message with the stakeholders in the cities and the counties, and the media, that drivers will be aware when the active speed limit signs go live, they'll be aware of what to expect and it won't be a surprise.

Member AlMBERG stated he was very supportive of the INFRA Grants for Highway 93 and passing and climbing lanes for Highway 93. He said he had expressed his concern about this very issue, and he was glad these safety concerns were being addressed. The \$6M that has been applied for increasing some of the passing lanes and climbing lanes; that's a great thing.

Member AlMBERG asked about the 150 miles that legislation gave them. How were those miles distributed?

Ms. Sondra Rosenberg, Assistant Director of Planning answered that it's up to the state how those miles are designated but they do not have the authority to determine where those 150 miles go.

Member AlMBERG then asked the Director about the proposed study they were going to conduct to get information about staffing levels and the difficulty filling some positions in the Department.

Director Swallow said she believed DHRM did a study, and they found Department positions were not paid competitively with their private and other local agency counterparts. There's not a lot of room to make adjustments with that because of the state salary system. Currently, they can't adjust NDOT employee wages without also making that same adjustment throughout the state.

Governor Sisolak affirmed they lack the resources to make that same adjustment.

Member AlMBERG said that the Department is very understaffed. Even though they realize their workload goes in peaks and valleys, they are not even staffed to that valley level. He thanked Members for keeping their focus on this ongoing issue.

Mr. Cole Mortensen, Deputy Director, replied that was correct.



Nevada Department of Transportation

Board of Directors • Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020

9:30 A.M.

---

Governor Sisolak said he wanted to congratulate Las Vegas Paving and the Engineer. They came in way under the Engineer's estimate which is over \$2.5M. That's a pretty nice savings of a lot of money.

**5. Consideration of Approval of Contracts over \$5,000,000 (For Possible Action)**

Director Swallow said there was just one contract for the Board's consideration, a rehabilitation project in and around the state.

Member Almberg asked when it breaks down and they see the bid schedule, it talks about uniform traffic control officer, and that's a straight up fee to everybody. Is that just at the straight up cost and everybody includes that in their bid?

Mr. Cole Mortensen, Deputy Director, replied that was correct.

Governor Sisolak said he wanted to congratulate Las Vegas Paving and the Engineer. They came in way under the Engineer's estimate which is over \$2.5M. That's a pretty nice saving of a lot of money.

**Motion:** Approve Agenda Item 5  
**By:** Member Valentine  
**Vote:** Passed unanimously

**6. Consideration for Approval of Agreements over \$300,000 (For Possible Action)**

Director Swallow said there were two agreements for the Board's consideration, one for environmental and preliminary design on the MSE walls in Las Vegas, and the other is for the DBE program, disparity study.

Governor Sisolak said he was very appreciative of staff's efforts to supply supporting information for Board questions during every step along the way for these agreements.

**Motion:** Approve Agenda Item 6  
**By:** Member Valentine  
**Vote:** Passed unanimously



Nevada Department of Transportation

Board of Directors • Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020

9:30 A.M.

---

7. Contract, Agreements, and Settlements (Informational Item)

Director Swallow said Item 7 on the Agenda are the contract agreements and settlements that have been approved since the last meeting as per the delegated authority to the Director. It is an information item only.

Governor Sisolak asked if anyone had any questions on Item 7, and there were none.

8. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

9. Executive Session

There were no Executive Session.

10. Adjournment (For Possible Action)

The Governor thanked everyone and said he would accept a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Adjourn the February 13, 2020 Nevada Department of Transportation Board of Directors Meeting

By: Member Valentine

Vote: Passed unanimously

  
Secretary to the Board