



Nevada Department of Transportation

Board of Directors • Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2024

9:30 AM

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**Meeting Location:**

1263 South Stewart Street  
Third Floor Conference Room  
Carson City, Nevada 89712

123 East Washington Avenue  
Building B  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

1951 Idaho Street  
Conference Room  
Elko, Nevada 89801

**SEC 1. OPENING**

**1. Welcome/Call to Order/Roll Call**

Governor Lombardo called the meeting to order on Monday, March 11, 2024. A roll call was conducted, and a quorum was established.

In attendance: Lieutenant Governor Stavros Anthony, Controller Andy Matthews, Member Virginia Valentine, Member Gary Perea, Member Frank Lepori.

**2. Public Comment**

Elisabeth Lernhardt indicated that last week Douglas County designated Highway 50 an Emergency Evacuation Road in concurrence with the Governor's decision of no lane reduction for the 13 miles from Spooner Summit to Round Hill. Ms. Lernhardt noted that today she is presenting the NDOT Board with this resolution for the record.

**3. Receive Director's Report – Informational Item**

Director Tracy Larkin Thomason welcomed new Assistant Director of Operations, Jae Pullen before moving into the slow filling of the vacant NDOT positions. Director Larkin Thomason indicated that interviews have been concluded for the assistant director of planning, and the position should be announced soon. The Director further noted that the interviews for the communication chief position have been conducted, and an offer has been made, that the two administrative assistants' interviews are being set, and that interviews are completed for the District 1 engineer with an announcement anticipated the following week.

Director Larkin Thomason next discussed Nevada Moves Month, explaining that each March, NDOT, through its Safe Routes to School Program, hosts a Nevada Moves Month, an annual event that promotes safe walking and biking to schools, as well as other physical activities. The Director indicated that this is the 14th year that Nevada has participated, and that activities are planned for Clark, Washoe, Carson City, Lyon, Douglas, Storey Counties, and other school districts across the state. Director Larkin Thomason indicated that the previous year, 6,600 students participated.

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Director Larkin Thomason informed the Board that NDOT was the recipient of three different partnering awards at the Associated General Contract award ceremonies: one for contract 3991, the Lockwood Interchange; one for contract 3956, drainage, bridge lighting, and pavement improvements along 32 miles of US 95 from Fallon to Trinity; and one for an emergency contract at Virginia City from the previous spring's erosion.

Director Larkin Thomason next discussed the storms that began in March, noting that Mount Rose Highway was closed from March 1 through 5 due to seven feet of snow falling over five days. The Director next noted that a semi jackknifed around 11 p.m. on Sunday on I-580. Director Larkin Thomason explained that because the winds were so high, NDOT could not get the heavy tow truck out to move it out of the way, which caused a delay on Monday. The Director discussed the uniqueness of the previous week, where all roads were dry coming into Washoe Valley, but then once in the Valley, visibility was low, and the jackknifed semi required travelers to go around East Lake, which caused the two-hour delay that ultimately turned into a three to four-hour delay.

Director Larkin Thomason informed the Board of a train derailment in Elko on February 28, noting that the train partially derailed under the 12th Street Bridge in downtown Elko and that multiple cars at the end of the hundred-car train struck the concrete bridge columns and spilled processed corn. The Director indicated that no one was hurt, that the cause of the derailment is still under investigation, but that the derailment caused primarily minor scuffing and scraping, mainly cosmetic, so no urgent repairs are needed.

Director Larkin Thomason reminded the Board of the I-15 Tropicana Phase 3 that has been put in place, noting that the permanent closures will go through the fall of 2024, and include the I-15 flyover to eastbound Tropicana; the Tropicana on-ramp to southbound I-15; northbound I-15 access to Arena Drive; and the I-15 northbound off-ramp to Tropicana Avenue.

Director Larkin Thomason discussed the South Virginia Street Management Plan in northern Nevada, which is between patriot Boulevard and St. Mount Rose highway and will identify short-term safety solutions, midterm cost-effective safety solutions, and long-term solutions pending the funding. The Director indicated that the in-person meeting for the public will be held on Thursday, April 11 from 4 to 10 at the Tamarack Casino in Reno.

Director Larkin Thomason next discussed the bond sales and thanked the Board for their authorization of the bond sale. The Director noted that prior to the sale, NDOT's highway bond credit rating was upgraded and that NDOT's credit rating is now very high. Director Larkin Thomason indicated that NDOT announced that the motor vehicle and fuel revenue bond sale interest rates were lower than projected at 3.41 rather

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than the projected 4.25, and that the interest cost on the 40 million bond, which had been projected at 4.33 actually came in at 3.42, meaning that over the length of the 20-year term, NDOT will pay \$15 million less than anticipated. The Director reported that the bond proceeds will be used on the I-15 Tropicana Avenue Interchange, the US 395 North Valley's widening and repaving, and on the upcoming Henderson Interchange.

Director Larkin Thomason next discussed staffing and outsourcing and noted that because Member Kalb had made the request for this information but was not available at today's meeting, she would be sure to send him an update. The Director reported that statewide, NDOT has under 21 percent vacancies, an improvement over the previous 26 percent. The Director then discussed the different districts, noting that: District 2 is at 24 percent, Headquarters is at 16, and Districts 1 and 3 are both at 18. Director Larkin Thomason explained that District 2 is split into two areas, the Reno-Sparks area and then the rest of District 2, which is more rural. The Director discussed the different positions open in the different area, noting that some of the rural areas have direct competition with the mines. The Director explained that District 2 is struggling with hiring professional positions, as well as maintenance, whereas District 3, which is in direct competition with the mines, is also struggling with engineering, but also with Highway Maintenance Worker 3s. Director Larkin Thomason indicated that season help used to be comprised of 100 to 140 hires per year, but now is only about five to 10 per season. The Director provided the Board with a breakdown of the specific vacancies by district. Director Larkin Thomason noted that NDOT is currently paying people to come in and do the jobs that in the past have been completed by these vacant positions.

Governor Lombardo asked if part of the augmentation is vacancy savings, and asked the ration of vacancy savings to outsourcing in terms of cost.

Director Larkin Thomason explained that she will get this information and report it back to the Board but noted that these are not necessarily coming out of the same pot of money and that overtime predominately comes from the vacancy savings. The Director reiterated that the numbers are trending in the right direction given that vacancy has dropped from 26 percent to 21 percent.

Director Larkin Thomason next discussed NDOT's recruiting efforts, beginning with the public service interns (PSIs), who are college students that come and earn competitive pay for the summer working for NDOT. The Director noted that there are usually about 68 of these positions, but this year, NDOT has received 158 applications. Director Larkin Thomason indicated that NDOT has begun a new program for student trade workers, for high school students ages 16 to 18, aimed for work in equipment shops, landscape crews, and buildings and grounds. Director Larkin Thomason explained that with this particular

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program, NDOT is competing with the pizza market, which has, at times, proven to be more lucrative for these students. The Director next discussed a rotational engineering program, in which six college-level students come in and do a two-year rotation around the department, at the end of which they are generally picked up by a department, thus making this program a pipeline to employment. Director Larkin Thomason explained that NDOT does a lot of outreach with the K-9 schools, as well as conducts job fairs, provides CDL training through the civil rights program, and works with Workforce Connections and the Hope for Prisoners programs.

Gary Perea questioned how Nevada compares with surrounding states in terms of vacancies and engineers, as well as with starting salaries.

Director Larkin Thomason explained that NDOT compared itself more with the local environment and explained that the workforce is an issue across the nation. The Director added that NDOT works closely with AGC in the north and the Nevada Contractors Association in the south and has workforce development committees with both entities. The Director further noted that NDOT actually funds part of this so as to enable more formal outreach, particularly for the construction sector, and to bring more people into the trades.

Lieutenant Governor Stavros Anthony questioned why, if it has become so difficult to fill these vacancies, NDOT has not simply eliminated the positions altogether and allowed the private sector to handle them.

Director Larkin Thomason explained that outsourcing is actually a three-plus ratio, which has a large impact on the budget and takes away from projects. The Director further noted inflation over the last three years, which has skyrocketed and caused an enormous extra cost even just on materials, money which then cannot be used for other projects. As such, Director Larkin Thomason explained that NDOT is looking closely at its projects and trying to right-size the program so as to continue in as smart a way as possible in terms of spending. The Director explained that when outsourcing, you are also paying for their overhead, their equipment, and their fleet.

Lieutenant Governor Stavros Anthony suggested the possibility of outsourcing positions, even though they cost more, that do not look like they will ever be filled so as not to waste so much time trying to find somebody to fill them.



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4. Consideration of Approval of the February 12, 2024, Nevada Department of Transportation Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. – *For possible action*

Motion: Approve the February 12, 2024, NDOT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
By: Controller Andy Matthews  
Second: Lt. Governor Stavros Anthony  
Vote: Passed unanimously

**SEC .2. CONSENT AGENDA: Items No. 5 through No. 7**

Governor Lombardo explained that items 5 through 6 will be taken together unless any of the Board members wish to hear an item separately.

**Contracts over \$40,000,000 or 20% over the engineer's estimate from January 12, 2024, through February 8, 2024**

There are no contracts.

**Agreements over \$10,000,000 from January 12, 2024, through February 8, 2024**

There are no agreements.

**Right-of-Way**

5. ABD 23-03: Resolution of Abandonment of a private access easement located near the Interstate Route-580 and United States route-395-A Winter's Ranch interchange, Washoe County, Nevada. – *For possible action*

**General Administration**

6. Consideration of Approval of Legislature-Approved Fiscal Year 2024 Procurement of Additional Vehicles in Accordance with NRS 408.389 – *For possible action*
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**7. Contracts, Agreements, and Settlements/Judgements**

Pursuant to NRS 408.131 the Board may delegate authority to the Director which the Director may exercise pursuant to NRS 408.205. These items and matters have been delegated to the Director by the Board by resolutions in April 1990 and July 2011. – *Informational item only*

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion:** Approve Consent Agenda Items 5 and 6  
**By:** Member Gary Perea  
**Second:** Controller Andy Matthews  
**Vote:** Passed unanimously

**SEC. 3. ITEMS TAKEN SEPARATELY FROM CONSENT AGENDA**

Agenda item 7 was taken separately from the Consent Agenda as it is informational only.

**SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS ITEMS**

**8. US 50 East Shore Corridor Management Plan. – *Informational item only***

Deputy Director of Planning and Administration, Sondra Rosenberg, reminded the Board of the original purpose of the study, which was first and foremost, safety. Deputy Director Rosenberg indicated that this is a complicated corridor with a number of challenges and limitations, which averages over 100 crashes per year and exceeds statewide average crash rates for similar facilities. Deputy Director Rosenberg added that only 8 percent of the corridor contains sidewalks or is served by transit, and only about 19 percent has bike facilities. The Deputy Director next noted that demand for recreation access and parking far exceeds the capacity during peak periods and as such, management strategies are critical, as is the environment and the negative impacts heavy visitation can have on the environment and water quality. Deputy Director Rosenberg added that there are significant communication gaps in the area, as well as a lack of travel information, including dynamic parking information. The Deputy Director indicated that NDOT alone will not be able to solve all of these challenges, but is a partner in this corridor and can certainly provide some opportunity to partner on those solutions.

Deputy Director Rosenberg next discussed the public outreach and engagement activities done by NDOT, including workshops, formal public meetings, and individual meetings. Deputy Director Rosenberg indicated that NDOT has had six rounds of some sort of public engagement and that the draft plan is now available at [US50eastshore.com](http://US50eastshore.com). The Deputy Director indicated that NDOT is holding an online public



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meeting, open and accepting comments from February 12 through March 14. Deputy Director Rosenberg indicated that thus far, 45 online comments and eight written comments have been received, and additional ones are anticipated. Deputy Director Rosenberg informed the Board of an in-person public meeting that took place on February 27 at George Whittell High School, which 83 people attended, and noted that a number of public comments were provided verbally at that meeting.

Deputy Director Rosenberg next highlighted some of NDOT's safety recommendations, noting that NDOT has identified some early actions and safety improvements that it hopes to advance or implement over the next two to three years, including pavement marking and edge striping countermeasures; new signs; establishment of a multi-agency safety and operations committee; as well as ones that will require partnership efforts, such as eliminating all highway parking on US 50, extending the East Shore Trail, and improving intersections.

Deputy Director Rosenberg next discussed additional recommendations including transit expansion, intersection signage, signal improvements, parking strategies, and technology, all which NDOT is looking into with its partners. Deputy Director Rosenberg explained that these will need to be worked on with partners at the lake.

Deputy Director Rosenberg indicated that in the plan itself, the implementation strategy I outlined, and time stratified with a list of a number of improvements. The Deputy Director added that all these recommendations will need additional analysis and funding identification, and noted that not all of them are NDOT-led. Deputy Director Rosenberg noted that this plan really sets the foundation and the vision for the corridor and indicated that this is really the beginning rather than the end in terms of gathering support for these strategies and then working with partners to implement them over the coming years.

Governor Lombardo questioned how the public could see the legend of these numbers.

Deputy Director Rosenberg explained that on the [us50eastshore.com](http://us50eastshore.com) website, under the documents tab is the draft order management as well as documents from the public meeting that include the implementation strategies, noting that this information is in the plan toward the end of Volume 1, which is the main part of the plan. The Deputy Director next noted that the website also contains NDOT's schedule and added that there are documents on the website that document the process and alternatives that were considered but not carried forward, and that is part of the study record. Deputy Director Rosenberg used the lane reduction recommendation as an example, noting that it exists in some of the older documents but has not been carried forward into the final document.

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9. **Executive Session:** Receive information from legal counsel regarding potential and existing litigation involving a matter over which the Transportation Board of Directors has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power and to deliberate toward a decision on the matter (Note: This item may be closed to the public pursuant to NRS 241.015(3)(b)(2) in order to discuss legal matters.). – *For possible action*

There was no executive session.

10. **Public Comment:** A period devoted to comments by the general public about matters relevant to the Board's jurisdiction will be held. No vote may be taken upon a matter not listed on the posted agenda. Comments will be limited to three minutes. Please clearly state your name and SPELL your last name for the record. If any of the Board wishes to extend the length of a presentation, this will be done by the Chair, or the Board by majority vote.

Ellie Waller, Douglas County, thanked NDOT for the US Highway 50 update, then noted that there is a trash issue at the intersection of US Highway 59 and State Route 28, where a planned roundabout or other options are presently being studied. Ms. Waller indicated that within the project area is a highly visited sled hill and that the proposed project is to include 250 parking spaces, a pedestrian crossing, and a boat inspection station, and noted that there are a lot of different users of the area across the different seasons. Ms. Waller explained that the area becomes very overcrowded with sledding activity, and noted that a recent example of the areas of trash were published in the San Francisco Chronicle. Ms. Waller added that seven years ago, when a resident of Glenbrook brought this forward, NDOT and the League to Save Lake Tahoe stepped up and helped, but beyond that, issues are not being resolved. Ms. Waller suggested banning the plastic sleds that are leaving the trash, noting that the article states that classic wooden toboggans or metal saucers are not being used, but rather distinctly flimsy candy-colored polyethylene that sell for 5 to 10 to 15 dollars at grocery stores and are convenient to use as disposables as when ridden down a cold slope, they can become brittle and easily crack. Ms. Waller asked that the sledding issue be taken into consideration and noted that this public comment is also a reach-out to agency partners.

Brett Tibbitts, Tahoe East Shore Alliance, commended NDOT for its gold standard in snow removal. Mr. Tibbitts explained that going to California in the snow is like taking your life in your hands, whereas NDOT does amazing work, especially given all the current vacancies. Mr. Tibbetts next thanked the Board and NDOT for eliminating the reduction, and opined that speed should be reduced on Highway 50 for safety purposes. Mr. Tibbitts discussed the varying speed limits between Spooner Summit and the casino corridor and noted that the vast majority of the blind curves, where the majority of accidents occur, are between Round Hill and Cave Rock, where the speed limit is currently 45 miles per hour. Mr. Tibbitts noted his wish

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to reduce that speed limit to 35 miles per hour in that area. Mr. Tibbitts noted that NDOT has said that it is pursuing lane reductions to 11 feet, and noted his belief that 11 feet is too narrow as residents need to deal with enormous logging trucks as this is the main transportation corridor of goods, and reiterated his suggestion to drop the speed limit to 35 miles per hour. Mr. Tibbitts indicated that at the TRPA Oversight Committee meeting the previous Friday night, Senator Titus had asked Deputy Director Rosenberg if Director Larkin Thomason had the signature power to lower this speed limit and the answer the Senator had received was yes, the Director did have the power to do so. Mr. Tibbitts concluded by requesting that this speed reduction be given a chance.

Jane Nyre indicated her puzzlement as to why a stretch like the East Shore Corridor uses the industry standard of average annual daily traffic rather than the maximums given the large discrepancy between the two. Ms. Nyre also discussed a bike path, noting her advocacy for a bike path that goes completely around the lake, and added that constraining it onto or parallel to Highway 50 actually makes this an over-constrained problem. Ms. Nyre indicated that there are available alternatives that are not being pursued. Ms. Nyre commended NDOT for clearing the roads during the last storm and suggested a chain-control checkpoint at the bottom of Highway 50 where Highway 50 and US 395 come together. Ms. Nyre indicated that there are many vehicles that proceed up the mountain without putting on their chains, and then stop traffic to put their chains on. Ms. Nyre acknowledged that this could be an issue given NDOT's current personnel issues.

Elisabeth Lernhardt concurred with Ms. Nyre's chain-control suggestion noting that when asked at Round Hill by a driver next to you at the light where the next chain purchase place is, it is too late. Ms. Lernhardt next shifted to safety on Highway 50, noting that there is still much work to be done. Ms. Lernhardt indicated that while lane narrowing is not practical because of the increased side-swipe risk by big rigs and during the snow, other things like widened rumble strips, mirrors, traffic lights, and improved configurations of shoulders are changes that can be quickly and cheaply accomplished. Ms. Lernhardt further noted that turning lanes would greatly enhance some neighborhoods. Ms. Lernhardt indicated that NDOT has variable amounts of the right of way along the highway and should use this for road improvements like the turn lanes. Ms. Lernhardt questioned why bikers are not willing to share the road and as such, requested if they can be taken off the road and placed in a separate area. Ms. Lernhardt indicated that in her experience, there is a significant amount of errant driving on Highway 50 that does not appear to be speed-related, and as such, opined that the road configuration would not remedy this, but noted that frequent policing would send the necessary message. Ms. Lernhardt added that several recent studies have shown the effect of legalized recreational cannabis has been an increase of traffic fatalities by 10 percent, and added that this issue is not being addressed by either TRPA or NDOT despite

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the fact that Nevada was included in this study of five western states. Ms. Lernhardt noted that of the 14-percent increase in impairment fatalities from 2020 to 2021, 18 percent had multi-drug causation, and added that a national highway traffic safety study found that 50 percent of motorists involved with serious crashes had drug use. As such, Ms. Lernhardt indicated the need for further attention to this issue.

Director Larkin Thomason noted that in the following month's meeting, NDOT will be covering the I-11 corridor for background. In addition, the Director noted that Congressman Amodei will be coming to provide some comments regarding this subject as he will be in Carson City.

There was no additional public comment.

11. Adjournment – *For Possible Action*

Motion: Adjourn the March 11, 2024, Nevada Department of Transportation Board of Directors meeting.  
By: Lt. Governor Stavros Anthony  
Second: Controller Andy Matthews  
Vote: Passed unanimously

Sajid Sulahria, Deputy Director  
Secretary to the Board of Directors