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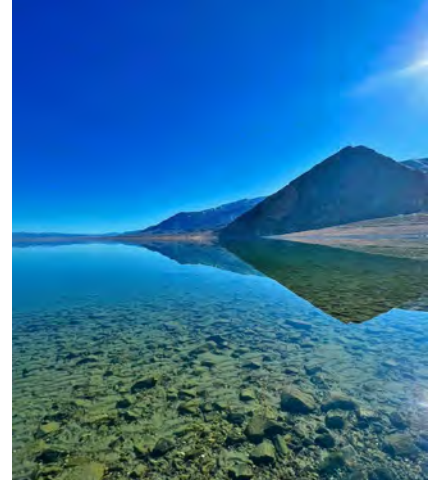
NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Rural Engagement Plan

A nonmetropolitan local official  
participation plan in conformance with Section  
450.210 of the Code of Federal Regulations

September  
2024

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▲ Walker Lake in Mineral County.  
Photo courtesy of Colleen Unterbrink.

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▲ Caliente Station is a historic  
 ◀ Mission Revival style railway  
 station in Lincoln County. The  
 station is listed on the National  
 Register of Historic Places. Photos  
 courtesy of Colleen Unterbrink.

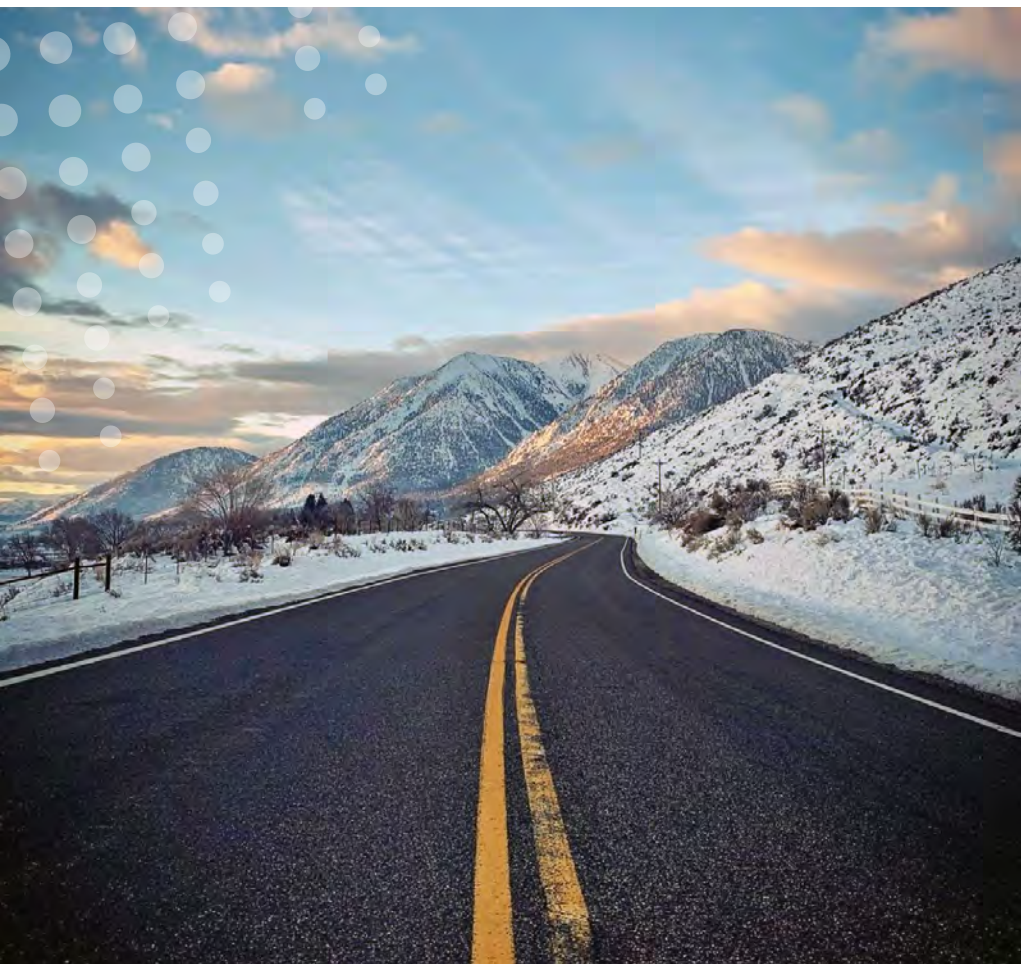
## one 1.0 – Introduction

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) is committed to a robust and collaborative rural agency consultation process. The process is described in this document, which serves as the guidance for coordination and collaboration between NDOT and local rural agencies. NDOT regularly works with rural counties and local agencies across the state in the development of its transportation plans and programs, including the One Nevada process and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). NDOT engages in a continuous coordination process (Exhibit 1) that helps the agency ensure that statewide needs are being met, and that local representatives have opportunities to participate in the planning process.

Exhibit 1. Rural Engagement Process



This document explains the process NDOT uses to coordinate with partner agencies, provides an overview of relevant federal requirements, and describes the agency’s goals for the rural engagement process. It also provides some background information about Nevada’s rural areas, describes the process used to develop the rural consultation program, and summarizes key outcomes of this process.



▲ C Street in Historic Virginia City, Storey County.

< Nevada, including Jacks Valley Road in Douglas County, averages 20 inches of snowfall each year. Photo courtesy of Colleen Unterbrink.

## 2.0 – Requirements for the Rural Consultation Process

Federal law requires NDOT to conduct statewide planning activities in cooperation with non-metropolitan local officials. One of the most important elements of this planning process is the selection of transportation projects to be completed across the state. The plan for conducting these consultation activities must be updated at least every five years and include a 60-day comment period.

NDOT continually seeks more accountable, efficient, and data-driven processes, including how it accepts and processes project needs and data. Thus, the department has chosen to use this process update as an opportunity to revitalize and improve the consultation process.

NDOT is also committed to developing and maintaining a transparent process that is approachable for stakeholders and members of the public. This document provides a complete yet high-level overview of the process.

### FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

- » Establish early and continuous involvement for public agencies
- » Provide for participation of rural local officials in development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP
- » Have a documented process for cooperating with rural local officials

Source: Code of Federal Regulations, Section 450.210, Interested parties, public involvement, and consultation.

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- ▲ *Farm District Road in Lyon County traverses ranching lands in northern Nevada. Photo courtesy of Colleen Unterbrink.*
- < *Lamoille Canyon, the largest valley in the Ruby Mountains, is located in the central portion of Elko County.*

## 3.0 – NDOT Goals for the Rural Consultation Process

In addition to ensuring compliance with federal requirements, NDOT also coordinates with rural local officials to help strengthen statewide transportation planning and project delivery processes. The rural consultation process is an ideal way to continue building relationships between NDOT and local governments throughout the state and help set realistic and productive expectations for transportation planning and project delivery. NDOT seeks to maximize the benefit of input from all rural areas and advance its efforts to support a safe and connected Nevada.

Ensuring a strong link between the Rural Consultation Process and the One Nevada Transportation Plan (described in Section 5.0) is another major priority. This connection ensures consistency between critical agency goals and efficiency in the processing of data.

### ENGAGEMENT

NDOT will provide highly accessible information and materials to members of the public, while providing opportunities for meaningful feedback and engagement.

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- ▲ Trucks travel 1.68 billion miles on Nevada's roadways each year.
- < US 93 is a major north-south highway in the western United States, traversing eastern Nevada for more than 520 miles.

## four 4.0 – About NDOT

NDOT is responsible for the planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of the 5,400 miles of highway and over 1,000 bridges that make up the state highway system. NDOT is divided into three districts, which are responsible for supervising state transportation activities within their local areas. District offices are located in Las Vegas, Reno, and Elko. NDOT's headquarters are located in Carson City.

Typically, NDOT headquarters will lead the planning, design, and implementation of large projects, such as highway widenings, bridge replacements, safety improvements, and major maintenance activities. The districts are able to respond to shorter-term needs, such as sign replacements, pavement and intersection improvements or bike lane additions.

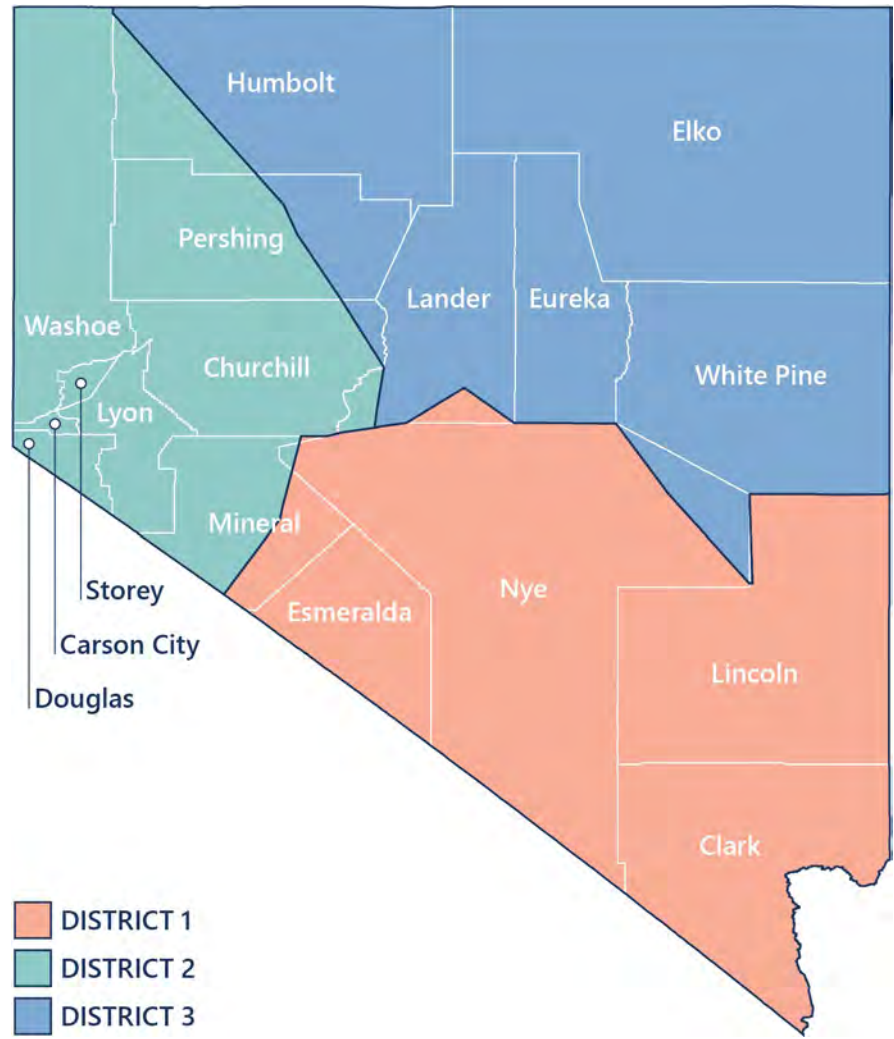
### MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Transportation does not just refer to roadways alone. NDOT also manages travel by rail, bike, air, and bus through our various multimodal programs.



▲ Nevada’s highways host many recreational bicyclists and commuters each year.

Exhibit 2. NDOT Maintenance Districts and Counties



## Programs and Services Provided to Local Agencies

In addition to building and improving the state’s transportation infrastructure, NDOT provides financial support and assistance to local agencies. Some of these programs include:

- » **Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program:** Federal funding is made available to local agencies through a competitive application process facilitated by NDOT. Funds may be used for safety, bicycle, pedestrian, and other transportation improvements that foster community improvement.
- » **Local Transit Grants:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides funding for the following local transit programs, administered by NDOT through a competitive process:

- > Mobility enhancement for seniors and individuals with disabilities (5310)
- > Rural area transit operating and capital funds (5311)
- > Bus and bus facility program (5339)

» **Local Road Safety Plans:** Safety is one of the highest priorities for state and federal transportation improvements. NDOT makes support available to local communities to develop data-driven safety improvement plans, identifying projects and strategies to address local safety issues.

## NDOT Rural Consultation Resources

The rural consultation process involves participation from NDOT personnel throughout the Department. The NDOT Rural Liaison is the primary point of contact for rural agencies. This position coordinates workshops and other consultation meetings with local agencies, participates in rural transportation planning discussions, and is a conduit to other divisions within NDOT to address specific topics. A summary of key roles is provided below:

### *Exhibit 3. NDOT Key Roles Aiding Rural Consultation Process*

<b>Position/Division</b>	<b>Role in Rural Consultation</b>
NDOT Director	Meetings with county leadership to discuss NDOT work program
NDOT Rural Liaison	Responsible for day-to-day communication with local agencies, including short- and long-term planning
NDOT Districts	Coordinate responses to local maintenance, construction, and operations needs on NDOT facilities
Transit Planning	Supports rural transit and coordinates transit grants
Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning	Supports bicycle and pedestrian planning and Transportation Alternatives grants/ Safe Routes to School
Safety Division	Supports safety planning and local agency safety grants



▲ *The Belvada Hotel was originally built as the Nevada State Bank and Trust in 1906 in Nye County. Photo courtesy of Colleen Unterbrink.*

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▲ Elko County is the fourth-largest  
◀ county in the contiguous United States, and is home to two indigenous tribes. Photos courtesy of Colleen Unterbrink.

## five 5.0 – One Nevada

The One Nevada Transportation Plan (ONTP) is the state’s long-range transportation plan, which equips NDOT with the strategic direction to meet Nevada’s current and future transportation needs. One Nevada is built on a foundation of six goal areas, reflecting the priorities of Nevada’s residents.



Enhance Safety



Preserve Infrastructure



Optimize Mobility



Transform Economies



Foster Sustainability



Connect Communities

## PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

The One Nevada process helps NDOT address questions to the public and the legislature, as well as provide transparency and accountability in responding to transportation improvement need requests.

The project prioritization process ensures that public dollars are being used to address the greatest needs.

One Nevada moves ideas through the project development cycle, from big picture needs to implementable projects. NDOT's STIP defines the projects that will be funded over the next four years.

NDOT must make choices and evaluate the tradeoffs between spending in one area or another. One Nevada has resulted in a data-driven and transparent process for NDOT to identify and fund projects that achieve their six priority goals. It allows a continuous process of planning, implementation, and preservation of Nevada's transportation system and is designed to be responsive to changes in needs, financial resources, and priorities.





▲ Freight movement is an  
 ◀ important part of the rural  
 Nevada economy. More than  
 80% of Nevada's lane miles of  
 highways are located in rural  
 counties. Photos courtesy of  
 Colleen Unterbrink.

## 6.0 – Rural Nevada

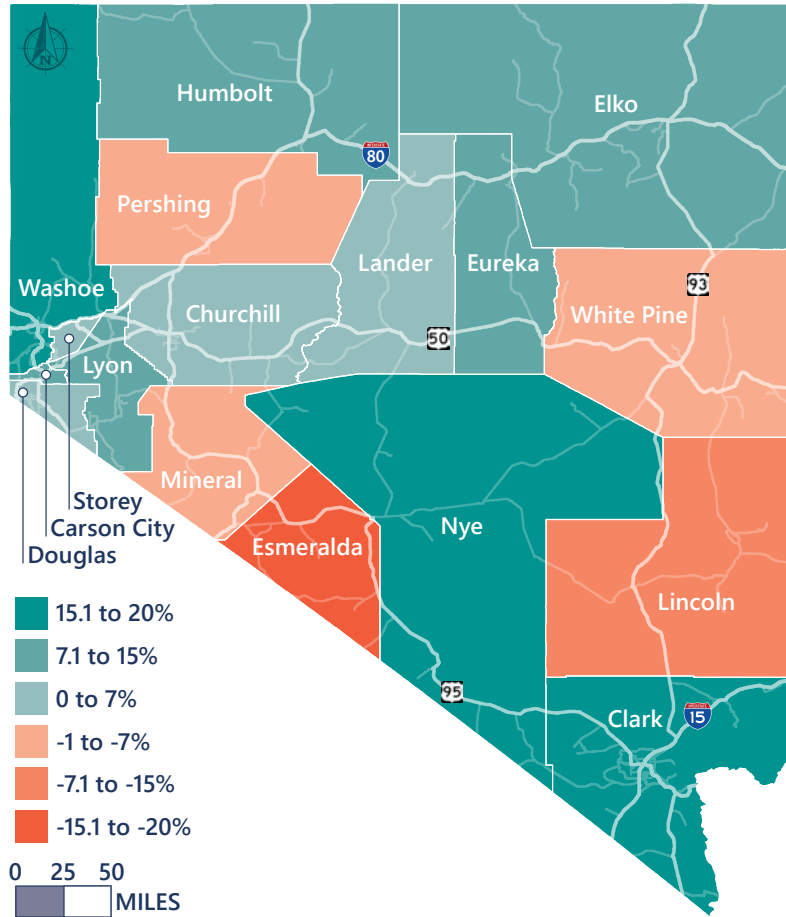
Nevada is a state of rich diversity, cultural heritage, and vibrant communities. Both urban and rural areas throughout the state are experiencing growth in population, tourism, commerce, industrial development, agriculture, and mineral extraction. NDOT partners with rural local agencies to address safety and mobility concerns for all modes of transportation on state facilities. Local transportation planning resources vary by region, and NDOT strives to support local transportation planning through targeted grant programs and integration with the One Nevada data-driven process.

Between 2010 and 2020, Nevada's 14 rural counties added nearly 25,000 residents, resulting in a total population of almost 300,000. In addition to Nevada's 14 rural counties, there are also rural areas located within the state's metropolitan planning organization boundaries. A snapshot of changes in population by county between 2010 and 2020 is provided on the next page.



▲ US 50 is a National Scenic Byway, running alongside Lake Tahoe in Douglas County.

Exhibit 4. County Population Change, 2010-2020



County	Population 2010	Population 2020	Population Change
Carson City	55,375	58,639	5.89%
Clark County	1,895,521	2,265,461	16.33%
Churchill County	24,946	25,516	2.28%
Douglas County	47,042	49,488	5.20%
Elko County	47,707	53,702	12.57%
Esmeralda County	892	729	-18.27%
Eureka County	1,724	1,855	7.60%
Humboldt County	15,986	17,285	8.13%
Lander County	5,545	5,734	3.41%
Lincoln County	5,060	4,499	-11.09%
Lyon County	51,515	59,235	14.99%
Mineral County	4,812	4,554	-5.36%
Nye County	43,878	51,591	17.58%
Pershing County	6,703	6,650	-0.79%
Storey County	4,016	4,104	2.19%
Washoe County	412,844	486,492	17.84%
White Pine County	9,765	9,080	-7.01%



▲ The Mizpah Hotel was one of  
 < Nevada's first luxury hotels,  
 serving as a social hub for  
 the booming mining town of  
 Tonopah, in Nye County.

## 7.0 – Revitalizing the Rural Engagement Process

NDOT included extensive analysis of national best practices in the development of this program, as well as consultation with stakeholders across Nevada. The process began as NDOT initiated a series of workshops with each rural county in the state during 2021 and 2022. These workshops were the first major in-person events held with all local governments since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. County and city staff, elected officials, tribal representatives, and members of the public were invited to participate. NDOT presented information about transportation initiatives and invited input regarding how the rural transportation planning process is conducted. NDOT continues to seek opportunities to improve collaboration with rural agencies. NDOT has implemented a continuous process for engaging with local partners, which includes county workshops and visits with each county commission, to be held on alternating years. During 2023, NDOT met with each county commission to discuss local priorities



▲ Old fire department building located in Tonopah, Nevada.

and investments. During 2024, NDOT is facilitating workshops with each county.

A review of rural consultation practices in other states was conducted to identify best practices and potential approaches for NDOT to consider. While the governance structures of each state department of transportation are unique, common themes emerged throughout the analysis:

- » The rural consultation process provides an opportunity to integrate with and strengthen the statewide transportation planning process
- » Outreach techniques may need to be customized based on local conditions
- » Collaboration between staff in department of transportation headquarters and districts or regions is critically important
- » Partnership with other local and regional transportation planning agencies or departments is vital




Many other states administer the rural consultation process through multi-county rural planning organizations or through the department of transportation regional offices. NDOT, in contrast, maintains a commitment to coordination with individual local agencies in rural counties primarily through the central NDOT headquarters office, in strong partnership with NDOT district offices. NDOT continues to prioritize direct consultation with all local governments throughout the state including those in rural portions of Washoe and Clark Counties.

## COMMITMENT TO COORDINATION

NDOT continues to prioritize direct consultation with all local governments throughout the state via the central NDOT headquarters office, and in strong partnership with NDOT district offices.

## Rural Consultation Process and Outcomes

NDOT is committed to a robust community and agency engagement process in rural areas throughout the state. The outcome of the process will be a collaborative partnership between NDOT and local agencies, resulting in a more resilient transportation system that is safe and connected. The consultation process will build this partnership through three key elements:

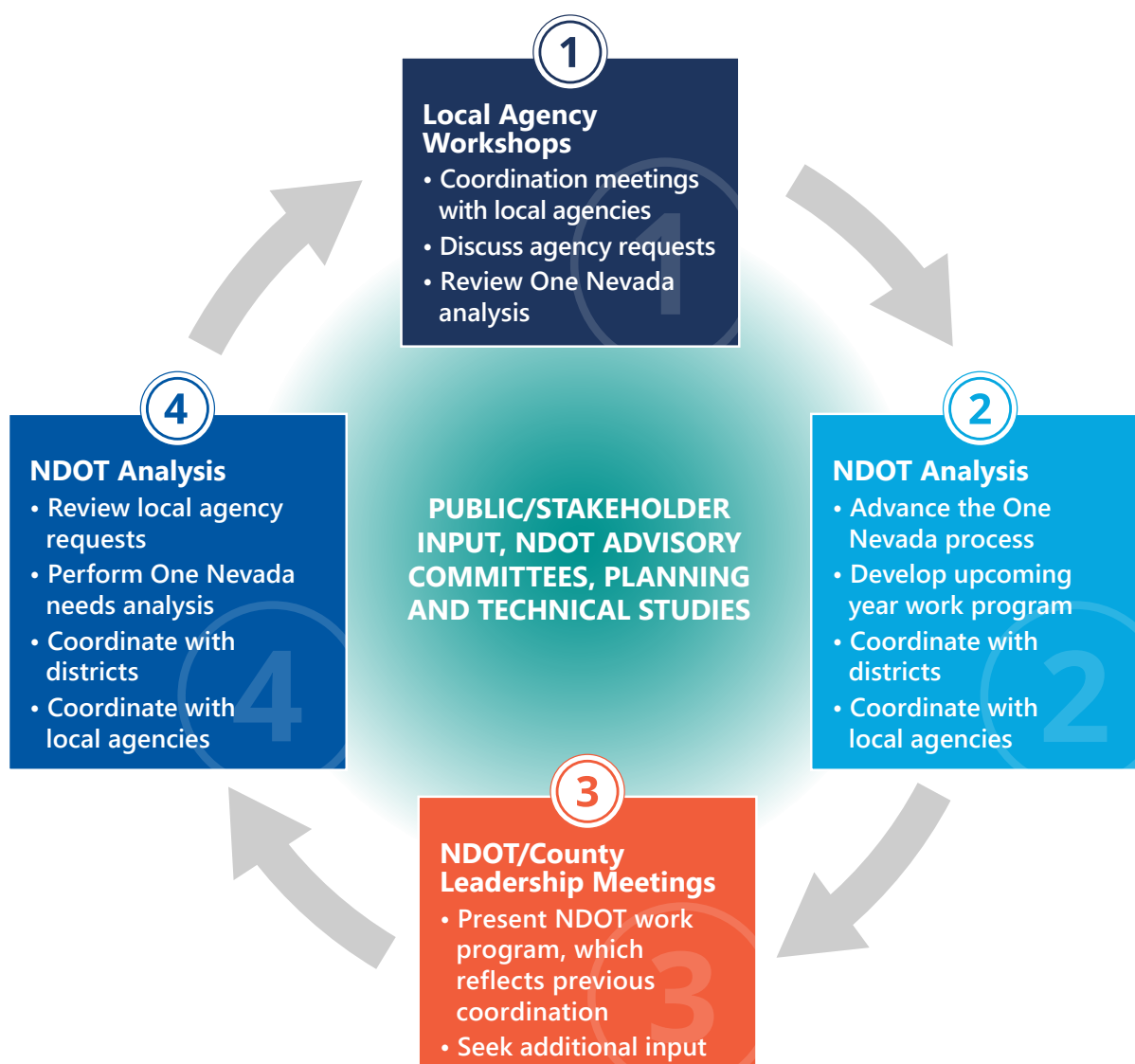
-  Frequent and open communication
-  Understanding of NDOT and partner agency roles and responsibilities
-  Commitment to a data-driven, performance-based planning process

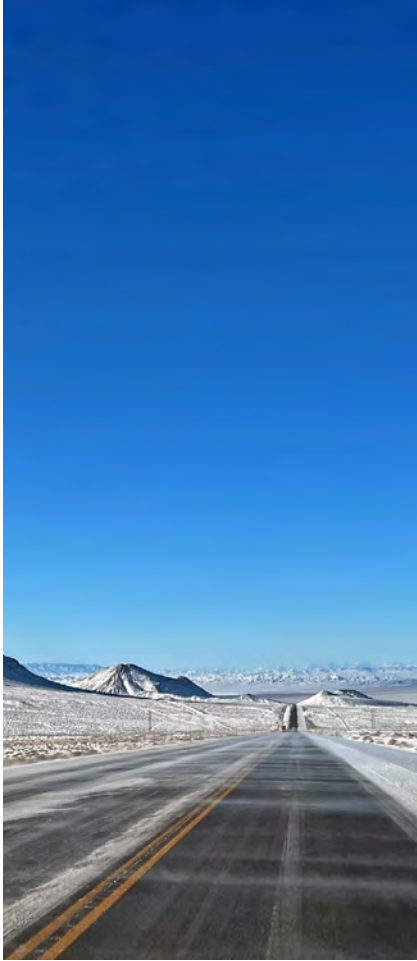
## A Continuing, Collaborative Engagement Process

As shown in the exhibit below, the NDOT engagement process with rural agencies is a continuous cycle. At its center are the multiple outreach, planning, and technical studies that may be ongoing throughout the year. Specific timing for these efforts can vary depending on individual project and plan schedules.

The consultation process is fully integrated with One Nevada and development of the STIP and annual work program. The process has two primary touch points for rural agencies: workshops and NDOT/county leadership meetings. These events are the formalized consultation meetings that occur on alternating years. In between these formal meetings, NDOT and local agency staff continue to collaborate, and the One Nevada process continues to advance. Additional detail about each phase is provided below.

*Exhibit 5. Rural Engagement Process*





▲ Roads and highways are the backbone of Nevada’s economy, allowing motorists to travel 25.2 billion miles annually and moving a significant portion of the \$167 billion worth of commodities shipped to and from the state each year. Photo courtesy of Colleen Unterbrink.

## 1 Workshops

NDOT invites county, city, and tribal leadership and technical staff to participate in the workshops. This provides the opportunity for a comprehensive and fully integrated discussion of local and regional needs for each county. NDOT presents information about upcoming funding opportunities and areas for further collaboration between NDOT and local agency staff. A key element of the workshop is communication about local transportation concerns and requests, with a focus on NDOT facilities.

## 2 Continuing NDOT Technical Analysis and Coordination

Following the workshops, NDOT staff continue integrating feedback received from local agencies and conducting the One Nevada statewide transportation planning process. This includes the data-driven needs assessment, needs validation, and project development process. During this phase, NDOT staff develop the NDOT annual work program and any amendments that may be needed for the STIP. The NDOT Rural Liaison and district offices continue to collaborate with local agencies on general transportation planning and other questions or concerns that may arise.

## 3 NDOT/County Leadership Meetings

The NDOT Director and leadership strive to meet with elected officials and staff of each county on alternating years to review the STIP and Work Program. This provides an opportunity for executive-to-executive dialogue and communication. The leadership meeting allows NDOT to share information about investments in the county that are planned for the upcoming year and continue to seek input from local leaders.

## 4 Continuing NDOT Technical Analysis and Coordination

This phase of the coordination cycle provides an opportunity for NDOT to consider input received from local agencies and continue conversations about transportation concerns and requests. Technical work related to the One Nevada process continues, coordinated with other targeted plans, studies, and projects that may be underway. The NDOT Rural Liaison and district offices continue to collaborate with local agencies on general transportation planning and other questions or concerns that may arise.

## Other Ongoing Engagement Processes

The rural engagement process builds on input received through many other coordination opportunities, as described below.

- » **County Dashboard:** NDOT created an [online dashboard](#) to highlight NDOT transportation activities and other information about each county. It also includes a simple form that can be used by local agency staff or elected officials to submit transportation questions or requests directly to NDOT.
- » **Transportation Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC):** This quarterly advisory committee includes stakeholders from across Nevada, including the Nevada Association of Counties and the Nevada League of Cities. TPAC receives reports on various NDOT plans, projects, and initiatives. These meetings are open to the public and may be joined online.
- » **Freight Advisory Committee (FAC):** The FAC meets quarterly and provides input into development of the Nevada Freight Plan and other freight-related plans and projects. These meetings include freight stakeholders from across the state, are open to the public, and may be joined online.
- » **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee:** This committee advises NDOT on statewide issues relating to bicycle and pedestrian planning and infrastructure.
- » **Nevada Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety (NFACTS):** The NFACTS provides discussion and guidance on the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The committee brings multidisciplinary transportation leaders from across Nevada together to address the critical safety needs faced by pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on urban and rural roads.
- » **NDOT Website:** NDOT's public information website at <https://www.dot.nv.gov/> provides information resources on project and other NDOT transportation initiatives throughout the state.

In addition, NDOT regularly participates in other agency and organization meetings to learn about rural concerns or initiatives. Examples of such meetings include:

- » One-on-one meetings with the Rural Liaison and District Engineer, as needed
- » Nevada Association of Counties
- » Nevada League of Cities
- » Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association – the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association holds a statewide planning conference and rural planning conference
- » Economic development agencies – Nevada rural agencies include:
  - > Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority
  - > Northern Nevada Development Authority
  - > County economic development authorities



▲ The Sixth Judicial District Court is located in the Humboldt County Courthouse in Winnemucca.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on NDOT's Rural Area Engagement Process, please see the NDOT website: <https://www.dot.nv.gov/mobility/rural-counties>.



For additional information, contact:  
Multimodal Planning  
Nevada State Department of Transportation  
1263 S. Stewart Street  
Carson City, NV 89712  
<https://www.dot.nv.gov/mobility/rural-counties>

