



**Next Move Arizona
Statewide Listening Tour**

**Eagar Area Listening Session
Meeting Notes**

December 11, 2025

Attendees

ADOT and Consultant Team

- Matt Moul, ADOT Director of Multimodal Planning
- Carl Ericksen, ADOT Northeast District Administrator
- Joshua Lee, ADOT Northeast Assistant District Engineer
- Daniel Hollis, ADOT Northeast Development Specialist
- Elaine Mariolle, ADOT Active Transportation Program Coordinator
- Kristin Darr, Consultant Team Facilitator
- Dillon Kennedy, Consultant Support

Agency and Public Participants

- Cris Patterson, Tucson Electric Power
- Anthony Bowler, Apache County Engineer
- Britney Reynolds, Town of Eagar Community Development Director
- Barry Williams, Town of Springerville Councilmember

Welcome

Matt welcomed everyone to the meeting and emphasized that Next Move Arizona aims to develop a statewide multimodal vision informed by broad input.

Discussion

- Round Valley, or Vallea Redondo from its Hispanic origins, refers to the region in the White Mountains that includes Springerville and Eagar. The area is geographically and topographically unique with very unpredictable weather. Mount Baldy is also located in Round Valley. It is an extinct volcano within the White Mountains and is considered sacred by the Apache people.
- A Navajo saying that “Mother Earth loves to shrug her shoulders” was used to describe dips and uneven pavement in the area.
- Tucson Electric Power is a major regional employer with 200 to 300 employees commuting every day and between 4 and 20 truck deliveries daily.
- The Coronado Generating Station in St Johns is also a major employer in the region.
- Transportation deficiencies are impeding economic development in the region.



- The Phoenix freeway system was noted as a point of pride, with strong foresight to invest through a sales tax and aesthetically well-designed facilities.
- Participants noted that Arizona's rural roads compare poorly to those in other states such as Ohio, New Mexico, Colorado, Oregon, and California.
- Apache County has not received legislative discretionary dollars for infrastructure projects, and Democratic legislators representing the district have limited influence within the current legislative environment. By contrast, discretionary dollars have gone to private entities, such as the Prescott Rodeo, raising questions about why such projects take precedence over public infrastructure needs.
- Poor pavement conditions were reported on US 60 east of Vernon and along the corridor between Snowflake and St Johns.
- There is uncertainty about future requirements, stipulations and politics around transportation funding. Navajo County receives approximately \$15 to \$17 million, which is typically spent in the southern part of the county, while Apache County receives roughly \$3 million, which is generally spent in the northern part of the county.
- Local funding limitations are a challenge. There is no municipal property tax to support transportation, only county-level collection, and HURF funds are limited, resulting in only a small project every four to five years. A local property tax mechanism to help fund improvements could be considered.
- The gas tax was identified as a statewide issue. As hybrid and electric vehicles increase, revenues are declining and users are not contributing proportionately. Participants noted a need to explore alternative funding mechanisms, referencing a past utility services fee from the Ducey administration as an effective model.
- Property tax presents structural limitations for local revenue. Many parcels remain behind on reassessment, enforcement capacity is limited, raising rates is politically difficult, and Apache County rarely adjusts rates. Property tax is also not collected on reservation lands.
- The area relies on regional revenue sharing for fiscal viability, with a limited local tax base largely supported by grocery retailers such as Bashas and Safeway. Despite a roughly 9 percent sales tax rate, revenues remain low given the small population and commercial base.
- Population is heavily concentrated in the southern portion of Apache County.
- Major employers in the area include Tucson Electric Power, Salt River Project, Forest Service jobs, local government, and schools. Historically, ranching and timber mills were also major employers, though most mills have since closed.
- Limited infrastructure constrains industrial growth. Rail would be transformative, but the rail spur from the BNSF line to the power plants is at risk of closure.
- The region lacks formal transit options. Medical transport often requires air evacuation, and the Round Valley Senior Center provides limited van trips to Show Low. Participants noted that even limited transit service would likely be highly utilized.
- Focus should be on maintaining roads first before expanding transit or multimodal options.



- It is currently challenging for residents with medical needs to live in the area and access the care they require.
- Better roadway conditions would play a critical role in attracting more tourism to the area.
- Coming from Show Low, locals prefer SR 260 over US 60 due to potholes.
- The St Johns–Concho–Show Low route has frequent fatalities.
- Potholes are appearing throughout the region, and US 60 is experiencing increased wear as trucks prefer it over SR 260, which has a steeper grade coming from McNary.
- SR 261 was reported to be in very poor condition.
- Safety is a major concern. Along improved sections of SR 260 near Heber-Overgaard, pavement conditions have improved but higher travel speeds have followed.
- Fiber was described as essential infrastructure, and establishing redundancies is important for reliability. A current project is extending fiber from Morenci to Alpine, but there remains a missing link north of Alpine to the Eagar area.
- The Town of Eagar noted that finding viable funding mechanisms is a major challenge. The town regularly pursues grants to advance priorities, and while sometimes successful, it is often difficult to compete for opportunities.
- Participants noted that they find it difficult to identify the right ADOT contact when pursuing grants.
- Functional classification limits funding options. Only two or three arterial routes in the area are eligible for ADOT funding, while many locally important roads are ineligible, such as the road connecting Eagar Town Hall and the Round Valley Public Library. Other locally important roads include Stanford Drive, which carries more than a thousand daily trips, County Road 5020, and Water Canyon Road, which sees trip volumes spike during winter closures of ADOT routes.
- Route redundancy is limited. While in-town grids allow local drivers to deviate between streets, all routes ultimately feed back into Main Street.
- Winter closures on I-40 east of Holbrook trigger automatic closure of US 191, generating major detour routing through St Johns, Show Low, Globe, and the Coronado Trail.
- Fuel shortages have been reported in St Johns and Eagar during rerouting events, and truck staging capacity near Winslow is limited. Seasonal population spikes in Heber-Overgaard also create fuel shortages during summer holiday weekends.
- Navajo and Hopi tribal communities have expressed concerns about diverted traffic using tribal roads that lack shoulders and receive limited maintenance.
- Planned pedestrian safety improvements for Eagar include High Intensity Activated Crosswalks (HAWKS) near the Sonic, Round Valley High School, White Mountain Regional Medical Center Rural Health Clinic, and Dollar General funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) with ADOT installing. HSIP also funded Main Street streetlights, and the town is seeking funding for a second crossing on 2nd Street.
- The most recent census showed population loss in Eagar, though participants noted the 2020 Census undercounted southern Apache County due to COVID-19 collection



challenges, limited broadband access and difficulty reaching older residents, resulting in funding implications for the region.

- The region and the state experience a significant seasonal population increase from March through October, which affects traffic and transportation infrastructure.

Key Takeaways

- Rural communities face structural funding limitations that constrain their ability to maintain and improve transportation infrastructure. Reliance on county-level revenues, limited tax bases, undercounts in census data, and competitive grant environments make it difficult for communities such as Eagar and Springerville to advance local priorities.
- Transportation deficiencies are impeding economic development. Industrial growth, workforce commuting, and opportunities for tourism are limited by poor pavement conditions, lack of redundancy, and insufficient freight infrastructure.
- Roadway maintenance and pavement conditions are a top regional priority. Participants consistently emphasized deteriorating roadway conditions, safety concerns, and the need to maintain existing highways before adding new modal investments.
- Network redundancy is limited, making weather closures highly disruptive. Detours create cascading impacts on local roads, fuel supply, freight staging, and emergency access, highlighting the need for more resilient routing strategies.
- Functional classification and eligibility rules create rural access barriers to state funding. Many locally important roads do not qualify for ADOT funding despite carrying meaningful daily traffic or serving community functions.
- The current fuel tax model is viewed as outdated and insufficient. Increasing hybrid and electric vehicle adoption is reducing revenue generation, prompting interest in alternative funding mechanisms.
- Lack of transit and medical access challenges affect quality of life. Without formal transit options, residents with medical needs must travel long distances or rely on air evacuation, underscoring gaps in mobility and access to care.
- Digital infrastructure is increasingly essential. Fiber connectivity and redundancy were identified as critical to economic development, reliability, and future competitiveness.
- Seasonal population swings significantly affect demand. Large increases in summer population, which is common in the region and statewide, place episodic strain on roadway infrastructure, fuel supply, and emergency response capacity.
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