

Policy Brief

New Legislator Orientation and Training: 2016–2017



Transportation

December 6, 2016

State Agency Overview and Mission

Nevada's Department of Transportation (NDOT) was established in 1917 under the name of the Nevada Department of Highways. Until 1917, the State did not participate in any road improvements. Since that time, the State began an active roadway program. Today, the Department builds, maintains, and operates more than 13,000 lane miles of State road and over 1,000 bridges making up the State's highway system.

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The mission of NDOT is to provide a better transportation system for Nevada through our unified and dedicated efforts.

Relevant Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapters or Sections

Title 35—Highway; Roads; Bridges; Parks

NRS 403—County Roads, Highways and Bridges

NRS 404—Road Districts

NRS 405—Control and Preservation of Public Highways

NRS 407—State Parks and Monuments

NRS 408—Highways, Roads and Transportation Facilities

NRS 410—Beautification of Highways

NRS 484D—Equipment, Inspections and Size, Weight and Load of Vehicles

Issues

Transportation Financing: State highways maintained by NDOT are financed with highway-user revenue and federal funds. No State General Fund (general tax) revenue is normally used. State and federal highway funds are principally derived from vehicle fuel tax and registration fees. Another financing mechanism is motor vehicle fuel indexing, which is the practice of tying the fuel tax to the rate of inflation to provide funds for transportation infrastructure projects. In 2013, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill 413 (Chapter 540, *Statutes of Nevada*), which allowed the Clark County Board of Commissioners to pass an ordinance to tie the fuel tax in Clark County to an inflationary index from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2016. The indexing of federal and local rates may be continued beyond that date if a ballot question at the 2016 General Election is approved by the voters in Clark County. In 2015, the Legislature revisited this issue to require all counties, except Washoe and Clark, to place a question on the ballot at the 2016 General Election to ask all voters in those counties whether to authorize their Board of County Commissioners to impose fuel revenue indexing from January 1, 2017, through December 31, 2026. The revenue would remain in the county where it is generated. Subsequently, the ballot question was approved only in Clark County.

2015 Legislative Session: Recent Legislation

Legislation related to pedestrian and bicycle safety, surface transportation systems, and financing were considered by the Legislature. These and other related transportation issues may be reconsidered in the 2017 Legislative Session.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

In 1962, the Federal-Aid Highway Act created the federal requirement for urban transportation planning largely in response to the construction of the Interstate Highway System and planning of routes through and around urban areas. States must use a portion of federal construction funds for the planning of transportation projects in urbanized areas of 50,000 or more in population using continuing, comprehensive, urban transportation process planning undertaken cooperatively by the state and local governments. The formation of MPOs by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 was partly in response to concerns over environmental and social issues in transportation planning. Metropolitan planning organizations serve as the policy bodies for metropolitan transportation planning. There are three designated MPOs in Nevada:

- **Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada:** In 1981, the RTC was named the MPO for southern Nevada. As the region's MPO, the agency is responsible to the State and federal government for maintaining a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process ensuring that transit plans and programs involve public input and recommendations as well as conforming to approved air quality standards. The RTC oversees the federally mandated transportation planning process for southern Nevada and plans the valley's roadways and transit infrastructure. The RTC also manages distribution of funds from the Federal Transit Administration, the federal Highway Trust Fund, the County Option Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax for regional, street and highway construction, and county sales tax designated for transportation.
- **Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County:** The RTC was formed in July 1979, which consolidated three commissions in an effort to increase the effectiveness and efficiency in the planning and implementation of the surface transportation program in Washoe County. As the region's MPO, the RTC administers the federally required transportation planning process within the metropolitan planning area. The RTC coordinates transportation planning activities with the three-member agencies: City of Reno, City of Sparks, and Washoe County, as well as other partner agencies including, but not limited to, NDOT, the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, the Air Quality Management Division of the Washoe County Health District, and the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority.
- **Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO):** Carson City was designated as an urbanized area in 2002 by the United States Census Bureau. In 2003, Governor Kenny C. Guinn designated CAMPO as the agency for metropolitan transportation planning in the Carson City urbanized area, which consists of Carson City, northern Douglas County, and western Lyon County.

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