



# Staff Report

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**Agenda Item:**           **AUTHORIZATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ADOT) PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL AREAS (PARA) PROGRAM**– Discussion and consideration for authorization of staff to submit an application for a traffic planning study through the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) Program.

**Staff Contact:**           Steven Burroughs, Public Works Director

**Meeting Date:**           May 27, 2008

**Background:**           The Arizona Department of transportation (ADOT) is announcing the availability of transportation planning funds and technical assistance through its Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) Program. The recently developed PARA Program replaces the previous Small Area Transportation Study (SATS) Program.

The PARA Program provides federal funds to counties, cities, towns and tribal governments for conducting transportation planning studies. PARA funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis and are 100% reimbursable and projects may address a broad range of planning issues related to roadway and non-motorized transportation modes. ADOT will enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) after funds are awarded then a Notice to Proceed must be issued to a consultant within six months of the finalization of the IGA.

The scope of work for this study would cover existing major collector and arterial roads, future expansion areas and possible growth areas surrounding the town.

Participation in the PARA program will provide information needed to update the General Plan and establish a foundation for a town wide traffic circulation plan to guide growth and development within the town.

**Recommendation:**   To authorize the staff to submit an application to Arizona Department of transportation (ADOT) for participation in the Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) Program.

PLANNING ASSISTANCE  
FOR  
RURAL AREAS (PARA)  
2008



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*Arizona Department of Transportation*

# What Are SATS?

- The Small Area Transportation Study (SATS) program is sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered through ADOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD).
- The primary objective of the SATS program is to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for a defined local area that will guide multi-modal planning and programming on local roads over a 20-year timeframe.

## What Are SATS? Cont'd

- Inventory current conditions on local roads, identify deficiencies, forecast future needs and identify and analyze alternative solutions.
- Develops a program of recommended transportation improvements and provides a staged implementation guide to meet short, mid, and long range needs.

# Old SATS Process

- Entity expressed initial interest in conducting a SATS
- Entity forwards a letter of commitment to ADOT TPD
- If request is accepted, entity develops a scope of work, a request for proposal (RFP), and forms a technical advisory committee (TAC)

# Why Change?

- SATS takes a one-size-fits-all approach to transportation planning in rural areas
- The current SATS scope is unclear on the role of state highways in planning for local and county roads
- Decisions on which SATS will be funded may appear inconsistent and confusing – there is no standardized application process

Small Area  
Transportation  
Studies  
(SATS)



Planning  
Assistance for  
Rural Areas  
(PARA)



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# Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) Process



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## *PARA – A New Approach*

- ADOT will fund 100% of study costs versus prior 80/20
- Funding is still on a reimbursement basis
- Focus will remain on non-TMA areas
- Local governments retain management of the studies
- ADOT will expand its role in providing guidance and direction to local governments

## *PARA – A New Approach*

- Studies will be customized to the needs of the community:
  - Funding may vary according to scope
  - Study may focus on special issues
  - Flexible study boundaries; may be sub-jurisdictional or multi-jurisdictional

## *PARA- Role of State Highways*

- State highways may be included in the scope because of the significant role they play in small communities
  - Does not commit ADOT to approving or funding specific improvements

# *PARA- Contractual Obligations*

- JPA language will be strengthened to clarify responsibilities of ADOT and local jurisdictions
- Invoicing will be based on milestones, which will be tied to deliverables
- ADOT must approve deliverables before reimbursement will be made
- Competitive selection will be required
- ADOT reserves the right to issue “stop-JPA order”

# *PARA – Application Development*

- New Standardized Application Process
- Consistent Submittals
- Applications Received on an Annual Cycle
- Specific Deadlines/Timelines
- Agreed Upon Policies
- Prioritization of Applications
- Expedite Selection Process

## *PARA – Submittal Process*

- Each cycle local entities will be notified by ADOT of funding availability
- Local entities will be asked to submit applications by submittal deadline
- Applications will be reviewed and ranked by an internal ADOT committee (TPD and PTD)
- ADOT committee will consult with COGs/MPOs
- Local entities will be notified once selection has been made

# PARA APPLICATION – *Additional Required Information*

- Brief description (200-500 words) of the proposed planning study (guidelines provided) – include:
  - Identification of planning-related issues
  - Justification of need
  - If State Route, include route number, beginning/ending milepost
  - Identification of local, county, tribal roads to be addressed in study
  - Amount of funding requested

# PARA Application – *Additional Required Information*

- Outline of a tentative scope of work
- Map of study area
- Estimated timeline for completion of the study
- Letters of support
- Documentation of dedicated funds for PARA
- List of previous relevant studies
- If applicable, list of prior recommended projects that were implemented

## *PARA – Evaluation Criteria*

- Applicant must demonstrate availability of staff to manage the study and ability to adhere to the schedule
- Applicant must clearly communicate study objectives and study need
- Applicant should include possible study start date
- Applicant must include all required elements

# *PARA – Next Steps*

- Finalize Application
- Notify COGs/MPOs of available funds
- Statewide workshops to rural COGs/MPOs
- Continue to refine and assess PARA process
- Start accepting applications for FY 2009

## *PARA – Next Steps (2)*

- Available Funds - \$2 million
- Workshops – March, April, May 2008
- Applications will be mailed May 2008
- Application due back to ADOT – June 30, 2008 by 5:00 p.m.

# Application and Documentation Example

**PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL AREAS (PARA) APPLICATION**

1. APPLICANT (City, Town, County, etc.)	MPO / COG/ Tribe	2. DATE
3. PROJECT NAME		
4. MAILING ADDRESS		
5. CITY	6. ZIP CODE	7. COUNTY(IES)
8. ADOT DISTRICT(S)		
9. PROJECT MANAGER	10. TITLE	11. PHONE NO. 12. FAX NO. 13. E-MAIL ADDRESS
14. ALTERNATE CONTACT PERSON	15. TITLE	16. PHONE NO. 17. FAX NO. 18. E-MAIL ADDRESS



**PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL AREAS (PARA) APPLICATION**

The PARA program sponsored by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Transportation Planning Division provides federal funds to counties, cities, towns, and tribal governments for the purpose of conducting transportation planning studies. PARA funds are limited to planning applications, and may not be used for the design or construction of transportation facilities.

PARA funds may be applied to address a broad range of planning issues related to roadway and non-motorized transportation modes. Partnerships between communities are encouraged. PARA funds may be used for planning studies that address the needs of multiple jurisdictions, as well as for needs that are limited to neighborhoods within jurisdictions. Applicants are encouraged to focus their requests for funding on the most critical transportation planning needs identified in their communities. PARA funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis and are 100% reimbursable.

**Applicant Information:**

1. Please identify the jurisdiction (tribe, city, town, county, etc.) applying for funding. Identify the MPO or COG region in which the proposed project area is located.
2. Provide date application was completed.
3. Identify the study name.
4. Provide mailing address of applicant.
5. Identify the county where project is located. If there are additional counties, list primary county first.
6. Identify the ADOT District where the study area is located. If the study area covers more than one ADOT District, list primary District first.
7. Identify the Project Manager. This person must be from the applying agency.
8. Identify an alternate contact person. This person must also be a designated representative from the applying agency.

**Additional Required Information:**

- o Brief description (200 – 500 words) of the proposed planning study. The attached guidelines are provided to assist in developing this description. The description should include:
  - Identification of planning-related issues
  - Justification of need
  - Route number and beginning and ending mileposts for any roads on the State Highway System that would be addressed by the study
  - Identification of local and/or county roads that would be addressed by the study
  - Amount of federal funds requested from the ADOT PARA program; if the applicant expects to supplement PARA funds with funds from other sources, please list amount and source of these funds
- o Outline of a tentative scope of work
- o Map of the study area
- o Estimated timeline for completion of the planning study
- o A minimum of two letters of support for the proposed planning study (from the appropriate Regional Council, Executive Board, District Engineer, COG/MPO staff, etc.). Applications for planning studies that address any road on the State Highway System must be accompanied by the written support of the appropriate ADOT District Engineer(s).
- o Document(s) that demonstrate availability of funds dedicated for PARA.
- o List of previous relevant studies (i.e., former SATS, General Plan, etc.)
- o If applicable, a list of projects implemented based on recommendations made by previous planning studies, such as Small Area Transportation Studies

**Safety**

- Improvement in crash rate (crashes per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled)
- Reduction in injuries

**Accessibility**

- Improvement in bike facilities on local roads
- Improvement of pedestrian facilities
- Improvement of facilities to enhance public transportation, such as added bus turnouts
- Improvement of public transportation accessibility through accessible transit facilities and increased service to elderly and persons with disabilities.

**Resource Conservation**

mobile source emissions  
fuel consumption

**Guidelines:**

The following planning elements are included to assist you in preparation of your application for planning assistance.

A key decision for your rural planning process is to determine the network of transportation facilities to be addressed by the proposed planning study and to identify the other plans with which coordination needs to take place. Successful rural transportation planning should address the following important planning elements:

**System Performance and Preservation**

- Methods to address under- and over-utilized facilities
- Preservation of right-of-way
- Multi-modal transportation needs identified through analysis of existing/future conditions

**Mobility and Access for People and Goods**

- Enhancement of freight movement
- Long range mobility needs for persons and goods, including multi-modal solutions
- Border crossings and access to intermodal facilities and major activity centers
- Connectivity between State and local roads that support rural economic growth
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities

**Environment and Quality of Life**

- Recreational travel and tourism
- Overall social, economic, and environmental effects of transportation decisions
- Effect of transportation decisions on land use and land development
- Planning for transportation enhancements

**Planning Coordination**

- Coordination with county, local, and tribal governments
- Coordination with elected officials
- Consistency with local, county, metropolitan, and state transportation plans
- Consistency with environmental and land use plans and regulations.

**Mobility and Economic Competitiveness**

- Improvement in vehicle-to capacity (V/C) ratio (weighted average by person-miles traveled)
- Reduction in hours of delay
- Improvement in mobility and reduction in congestion by improving a region's multi-modal transportation system

**DISTRICT ENGINEER'S LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR  
PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL AREAS (PARA) APPLICATION**

I (name of District Engineer) support the (city, county, town, etc.) application submittal for Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) funds to conduct a planning level study. I acknowledge that the study area will include SR \_\_, SR \_\_, etc. I will also be available to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

SIGNATURE

# Letters of Support Examples

**MPO's/COG's LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR  
PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL AREAS (PARA) APPLICATION**

I (name of MPO/COG Director) support the (city, county, town, etc.) application submittal for Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) funds to conduct a planning level study. I am aware of the area this study will encompass. I will also be available to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

SIGNATURE

**BOARD/COUNCIL'S LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR  
PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL AREAS (PARA) APPLICATION**

We (name of Board/Council) support the (city, county, town, etc.) application submittal for Planning Assistance for Rural Area (PARA) funds to conduct a planning level study. The (Board/Council) has budgeted (dollar amount) to assist in the completion of this study.

SIGNATURE

Attachment: Resolution or Copy of Meeting Minutes

# Contact Information

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