

Minutes of the
Maricopa Association of Governments
Regional Council Executive Committee
February 18, 2025

This meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom

[Video recording of the meeting](#)

MEMBERS	ATTENDANCE
Buckeye: Mayor Eric Orsborn, Treasurer	Virtual
Chandler: Mayor Kevin Hartke, Chair	Virtual
El Mirage: Mayor Alexis Hermosillo, Vice Chair	Virtual
Glendale: Mayor Jerry Weiers	Virtual
Mesa: Mayor Mark Freeman	Virtual
Phoenix: Mayor Kate Gallego, Past Chair	Virtual
Queen Creek: Mayor Julia Wheatley	Virtual

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Regional Council Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Hartke at 12:00 p.m. Roll call was taken to confirm a quorum of members was present.

2. Call to the Audience

MAG staff indicated that there were no online written public comments received for the Call to the Audience.

3. Informational Items

Chair Hartke indicated that there were no items on the agenda for information only.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Chair Hartke stated that agenda items 4A through 4H were on the Consent Agenda.

He asked if any members had questions or would like a presentation on any of the Consent Agenda items. None was noted.

MAG staff indicated that there were no online written public comments received for the Consent Agenda.

Chair Hartke requested a motion to approve the agenda item. Mayor Orsborn moved to approve the Consent Agenda for items 4A through 4H, and Vice Chair Hermosillo seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Freeman, Chair Hartke, Vice Chair Hermosillo, Mayor Orsborn, and Mayor Weiers.

No response was received from Mayor Gallego and Mayor Wheatley.

4A. Approval of the November 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved the November 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

4B. Approval of the December 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved the December 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

4C. Amendment to the MAG FY 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget for Crowdsourced Mobility Data

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved an amendment to the MAG FY 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget to add unobligated funding of \$200,000 from the FY 2022-2023 Vehicle Trajectory Data Acquisition On-Call to a new Crowdsourced Mobility Data project.

The MAG Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Biennial MAG Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget was approved by the MAG Regional Council on May 24, 2023. It included a budget of \$400,000 allocated to the FY 2022-2023 Vehicle Trajectory Data Acquisition On-Call. Using these resources, MAG recently piloted a crowdsourced mobility data solution that provided continual measurement and monitoring of regional arterial traffic conditions at intersections and along selected corridors which can help MAG member agencies operate arterial networks more effectively. MAG seeks to expand the scope of its efforts and provide this capability to additional MAG member agencies. This agenda item represents a request to amend the FY 2024-2025 Biennial UPWP and Budget to transfer unobligated funding of \$200,000 from the Vehicle Trajectory Data Acquisition On-Call to a new Crowdsourced Mobility Data project.

4D. Amendment to the MAG FY 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget for the Arizona Sun Cloud – Statewide Implementation and Innovations AID Grant Project

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved an amendment to the MAG FY 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget to add \$1,000,000 for the Arizona Sun Cloud – Statewide Implementation and Innovations AID Grant Project.

The MAG Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget was approved by the MAG Regional Council on May 24, 2023. On November 1, 2024, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and MAG were awarded a federal Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration Program grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to support the update and statewide expansion of the Sun Cloud Data Portal. The portal is a repository for transportation and socioeconomic datasets within the Sun Cloud megaregion — the grant will expand the portal to include statewide data. This agenda item represents a request to amend the MAG FY 2024-2025 Biennial UPWP and Budget to accept funding from FHWA and ADOT for the AID grant and to program a portion of the funds for consulting services.

4E. Amendment to the MAG Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget for the Arizona State University Regional Ground Level Ozone Research (GLOR) Study

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved an amendment to the MAG Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget to add \$750,000 for the Ground Level Ozone Research study.

The MAG Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget was approved by the MAG Regional Council on May 24, 2023. Since that time, the need for funding for a new study on Ground Level Ozone Research (GLOR) being conducted by Arizona State University (ASU) has been identified. This agenda item represents a request to amend the FY 2024-2025 UPWP and Budget by \$750,000 for the GLOR study. On January 22, 2025, the MAG Regional Council approved the transfer of \$750,000 to the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) for the region’s contribution to the study. ADOT, who has an agreement with the Arizona Transportation Institute (AZTI) – a collaborative effort between the three state universities in Arizona – would then provide the funding to ASU for the project. Subsequent to Regional Council action, it was determined that programmatic constraints exist that would make transferring the funding untenable. Specifically, AZTI assesses administrative costs to oversee grants and grant funding, requiring either additional funding be added to the request or reducing the amount of funding the region could contribute to the study. Based on additional conversations with ADOT and the project team at ASU, it was determined the best course of action would be for MAG to directly contract with ASU. This agenda item represents the request to add the previously approved funding to the UPWP.

4F. Consultant Selection for the Loop 101 (Price Freeway): Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) to US 60 (Superstition Freeway) Bottleneck Study and Corridor Plan

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved the selection of WSP USA Inc. for the Loop 101 (Price Freeway): Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) to US 60

(Superstition Freeway) Bottleneck Study and Corridor Plan and if negotiations are not successful, that MAG pursues negotiations with its second choice, HDR Engineering.

The MAG Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget includes \$925,000 for the Loop 101 (Price Freeway): Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) to US 60 (Superstition Freeway) Bottleneck Study and Corridor Plan. The purpose of this study is to build consensus around a program of recommended corridor improvement projects. These include projects that can be implemented to improve overall safety and serve future demand through reduced congestion duration, increased travel time reliability, and improved system redundancy. A request for proposals was advertised on October 30, 2024, with a total of five proposals received by the December 11, 2024, deadline. On January 17, 2025, a multijurisdictional evaluation team met and recommended selection of WSP USA Inc. Additionally, the evaluation team recommended that if negotiations with WSP USA Inc. are not successful, that MAG pursues negotiations with the second highest scoring consultant, HDR Engineering.

4G. Consultant Selection for the Fiscal Year 2025 Title VI Program Update

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved the selection of HDR Engineering Inc. for the Fiscal Year 2025 Title VI Program Update and if negotiations are not successful, that MAG pursues negotiations with its second choice, Kimley Horn.

On October 8, 2024, the MAG Regional Council Executive Committee approved an amendment to the MAG Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget to include \$200,000 for the Title VI Program Update. The successful consultant will conduct a comprehensive assessment of MAG's current Title VI and Environmental Justice Program, including a review of best practices nationwide. The consultant will identify Title VI program approaches and establish new protocols to be integrated into MAG's planning and programming work. A framework also will be established for the Title VI and Environmental Justice Program document, as well as the Annual Goals and Accomplishments Report provided annually to the Arizona Department of Transportation.

A request for proposals for the FY 2025 Title VI Program Update was advertised with a total of two proposals received by the January 15, 2025, deadline. On January 23, 2025, an evaluation team met and recommended the selection of HDR Engineering Inc. (HDR). Additionally, the evaluation team recommended that if negotiations with HDR are not successful, MAG pursues negotiations with the second highest scoring consultant, Kimley Horn.

4H. Officer Appointments for the MAG Transportation Review Committee

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved the appointment of the MAG Transportation Review Committee chair and vice chair through December 31, 2025.

According to the MAG Committee Operating Policies and Procedures, officer appointments for technical and other policy committees are made by the MAG Regional Council Executive Committee for two-year terms with succession of positions occurring through the ascending order of officers. Appointment to fill vacancies of the MAG Transportation Review Committee chair and vice chair is requested.

5. Consultant Selection for the Fiscal Year 2025 Clean Air Act Section 179B Demonstration of International Transport of Emissions and Air Quality Update

Chair Hartke requested Matt Poppen, environmental director, to present this item. This item was on the agenda for action.

Mr. Poppen provided an update on the status of the region's classification as a moderate nonattainment area for the ozone standard by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the likelihood of it being reclassified to serious. If reclassified, he indicated MAG must submit a serious area plan to EPA by January 1, 2026, laying out a plan for how the region will meet the ozone standard. He indicated that even if the region were to adopt new attainment measures, it would not be enough to model attainment by January 1, 2026, and the only way to be able to demonstrate attainment by that date is to exclude international ozone emissions brought to the region by air currents from Mexico or from Asia. MAG issued a request for proposals for consultants for the preparation of a Clean Air Act Section 179B Demonstration of International Transport of Emissions. Mr. Poppen explained that the purpose of the project is to demonstrate the concentration of ozone within the nonattainment area that is caused by transported international emissions. MAG received a response from Ramboll Americas, a consulting firm that has completed 179B demonstrations for other Intermountain West states, like Utah. If approved, Ramboll will be preparing a 179B demonstration for MAG that the region would have attained or will attain the EPA ozone standard in 2026, if emissions from Mexico and Asia can be excluded.

Chair Hartke asked if the EPA has the capacity to review the study given the staff cuts and uncertainty at the agency. Mr. Poppen indicated MAG is monitoring the evolving situation at the federal level and the agency will likely have staff available to review a 179B demonstration. He shared that MAG is aware that Arizona's Republican congressional delegation has submitted a letter to President Trump asking that he direct the EPA administrator to determine that the region would have attained the moderate designation for ozone standards, but for international emissions. He mentioned that MAG might have to consider adding additional funds to this contract to do an additional backward-looking study to show how excluding international emissions would keep the region at the moderate designation.

Mr. Zuercher indicated that the EPA has continued to engage with MAG regularly on this subject because this issue is a requirement of the Clean Air Act and businesses depend on a functioning EPA to comply with the Clean Air Act. He added that the EPA under the current administration might have a different approach to their guidance and MAG will

continue to engage with them. Chair Hartke replied that he believes it is a good idea to continue the current process to show the effects of the international transport of ozone.

Mayor Freeman asked whether there would be a way to show how air comes into the region from elsewhere and whether the EPA evaluates the impact of air from forest fires in northern Arizona or from forest fires from California and elsewhere. Chair Hartke responded that MAG has approved a study with Arizona State University (ASU) and partners whose purpose is to measure whether there is ozone transported from elsewhere through air currents. Mr. Poppen added that MAG is hoping that the Ground Level Ozone Research (GLOR) project that Chair Hartke mentioned will be happening during this summer and should provide more insights on ozone transport and formation in the region. He added that wind patterns can help determine the transport of ozone from other areas. For example, if the wind comes from Mexico, it's much easier to attribute emissions to Mexico, or if the wind patterns are out of the West coming across California, then the international emissions source is more likely to be from Asia.

Mr. Poppen added that regarding the new EPA standard for fine particulate matter (PM-2.5), the Governor's office has not yet submitted the required recommendations to EPA on nonattainment area boundaries for PM-2.5, citing that there is a lawsuit pending on this issue. Chair Hartke asked if Senator Kelly and Senator Gallego could also work to perhaps rescind the PM-2.5 standard. Mr. Poppen responded that the pending lawsuit was one of the reasons the Governor's office stated for not submitting the recommendations. He added that a path to reviewing the PM-2.5 standard might be one of the issues the new administration might address.

Chair Hartke asked if any members had further questions or comments regarding the agenda item. There were none.

MAG staff indicated that there were no online written public comments received for the agenda item.

Chair Hartke requested a motion for the agenda item. Mayor Wheatley moved to approve the selection of Ramboll Americas Engineering Solutions, Inc. for the FY 2025 Clean Air Act Section 179B Demonstration of International Transport of Emissions, and Mayor Orsborn seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Freeman, Mayor Gallego, Chair Hartke, Vice Chair Hermosillo, Mayor Orsborn, Mayor Weiers, and Mayor Wheatley.

6. Development of the MAG Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget

Chair Hartke requested Kathy Christensen, accounting program manager, to present this item. This item was on the agenda for information and discussion.

Ms. Christensen presented the development of the fiscal year (FY) 2026-2027 MAG Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget that identifies planning priorities and activities to be carried out within the metropolitan planning area. She indicated the UPWP details MAG's project schedules, costs and funding sources and once approved, amendments are submitted to the Arizona Department of Transportation for approval. She discussed the UPWP's three main components: Programs in Brief, which provides a summary budget document of approximately 15 to 20 pages; Overview and Work Program Elements, which includes a detailed breakdown of planned activities; and the Budget Section, which provides financial allocations and details.

Ms. Christensen noted the MAG FY 2025 budget reflects approximately \$38.1 million in revenues, the majority of which is allocated to transportation and related agency support expenditures. She indicated the development process is structured incrementally to allow for input. In February, draft member dues and assessments and preliminary lists of proposed projects are presented, and in March, staffing changes and salary adjustments are reviewed; in April, draft FY 2026-2027 narratives, including two of the three main UPWP components, are presented; and in May, the final document is submitted for approval.

Ms. Christensen noted the dues and assessments account for less than 3 percent of MAG's operating budget and that the proposed FY 2026 dues and assessments reflect a 4.13 percent Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase and the elimination of the 911 planning assessment ongoing work associated with the 911 activities. Ongoing 9-1-1 activities will now be included in member agency dues, and the water quality assessment has been adjusted to align with anticipated work. She indicated the proposed FY 2027 dues and assessments include a 2.96 percent CPI increase and an increase to the solid waste assessment to support regional research updates. These calculations are based on FY 2025 population figures, as approved by the MAG Regional Council on December 4, 2024.

Mr. Zuercher mentioned the MAG budget development process is a little different from the municipal budget development process because MAG is governed by federal transportation law in developing the budget and works with ADOT. He indicated that MAG prioritizes presentation of draft dues and assessments early in the process so that member agencies can reflect them in their budgets. He noted that the dues fund a very small percentage of the agency's budget, unlike the Arizona League of Cities and Towns or the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA), and that while MAG doesn't depend on dues as a primary source of funding, they play a critically important role to fund work in areas like domestic violence and providing quality meeting spaces, among other things.

Mr. Zuercher noted that for FY 2026, the dues and assessments will be almost \$190,000 less than FY 2025 due to the 911 assessment being removed in reflection with cities individually contracting with the state for 911, and that MAG has adjusted the dues for water quality assessment to more accurately reflect the anticipated staff time needed for

the projected work ahead. He mentioned a notable development for the FY 2027 dues and assessments is a request from member agencies to update a solid waste best practices report that MAG prepared almost 10 years ago.

Ms. Christensen continued the presentation with a list of proposed project funding with cost estimates and anticipated completion timeline, with most of the proposed funding for FYs 2026 and 2027 allocated to 31 transportation projects totaling just over \$18.5 million, five environmental projects totaling \$3.8 million, and a community initiatives project of \$70,000. In her concluding summary slide of projects, she highlighted several key projects, including the Airport Travel Survey, the Central Valley Transportation Corridor Study, the US 60 (Ironwood Drive to Superstition Mountain Drive) Corridor Study, the US 60 (Grand Avenue) Corridor Optimization Study, and the Solid Waste Projects and Programs in the MAG Region Update.

Chair Hartke asked if any members had questions or comments regarding the agenda item. There were none.

7. Executive Director's Report

Chair Hartke introduced Mr. Zuercher, who indicated that there was no report from the executive director, and suggested the committee move to the legislative update agenda item.

8. Legislative Update

Samantha Klakulak, government relations project manager, reported on this item. This was on the agenda for information and discussion.

Ms. Klakulak indicated this was the sixth week of the legislative session and she was presenting on one bill, SB 1284: Fireworks; Aerials; Licensure; Penalties. She noted the proposed bill is similar to legislation that has been introduced in previous years, and which expands allowable consumer fireworks. She indicated this proposed legislation would have a negative impact on air quality in the region, specifically with the presence of PM-2.5. Last month's Regional Council meeting had a discussion around the issue of air quality around December 31 and January 1. Ms. Klakulak indicated this legislation conflicts with MAG's approved policy principles as part of the agency's air quality planning efforts. MAG is seeking input on the proposed legislation.

Mr. Zuercher asked Ms. Klakulak to share more information on why MAG is recommending opposing the proposed legislation. She indicated the proposed legislation expands the types of aerial fireworks that consumers can purchase, which would affect the region's PM-2.5 levels. The proposed bill also contains measures related to wholesale and to jurisdiction and enforcement of fire marshals. She indicated the bill would expand the types of allowable fireworks, increasing the kinds of fireworks that could be launched in the air than was permitted before. Chair Hartke asked which legislator was sponsoring

the bill and she responded that it was Senator Gowan. She added that the bill has not moved through the process yet and that this is the last week to hear bills in their committee chamber of origin.

Chair Hartke clarified that the request was for MAG voicing opposition to the proposed bill due to the negative effect on air quality. He indicated that he agreed with the position and asked if any committee member was opposed to this direction. Mr. Sam Coffman, MAG legal counsel, clarified that this agenda item was for information and discussion and was not an action item that the committee could vote on.

Mayor Weiers suggested that if an amendment was offered based on the facts to exclude Maricopa County as region in nonattainment and allow the expansion in the other counties in the state, it might give the legislators a solution where they could address MAG's concerns and still allow an expansion of permissible fireworks. Chair Hartke indicated that it was a good suggestion, particularly as it pertained to the issue of PM-2.5 in Maricopa County. He asked if there were additional comments.

Mayor Orsborn agreed that Mayor Weiers's suggestion could give the bill sponsors a win while protecting the region from additional pollution. He mentioned that the City of Buckeye receives more complaints about fireworks than anything else and the city could mention in social media channels that residents can reach out to the legislature to voice their opposition to any increase in fireworks sales or increase in when they can be used. Chair Hartke wondered if suggesting more restrictions on allowable times for fireworks use should be considered. Mayor Gallego said that it would be helpful that MAG point out that the region experienced the worst air quality in the country on New Year's Day and that it was driven by fireworks. She indicated she supports opposition to the bill per staff recommendation, or Mayor Weiers's proposal that any region with PM-2.5 non-attainment or in danger of non-attainment would not be included in the expansion of fireworks. Mayor Freeman indicated he agreed with the consensus in opposing the bill and that the City of Mesa is opposing the bill.

Mr. Zuercher indicated that the committee has already given MAG authority to voice opposition to the proposed bill through its adopted MAG Policy Principles and that this sort of input about the nuances of how the agency signs in to oppose the legislation was very helpful. Mr. Coffman agreed with the framing and that the input has been helpful. Chair Hartke agreed with the suggestions from Mayor Gallego and from Mayor Weiers.

Chair Hartke asked if any members had further questions or comments regarding the agenda item. There were none.

9. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair Hartke asked members if there were any requests for future agenda items. None was noted.

10. Comments from the Committee

Chair Hartke asked the members if there were any comments.

Chair Hartke praised Mayor Orsborn for the Buckeye Air Show and that it was a very good event. Mayor Orsborn indicated that the City of Buckeye is excited about growing the event into a regional event that all be proud of. He gave the example of the annual air show in Oshkosh, Wisconsin that draws 600,000 attendees. He mentioned that on Friday, there were 2,000 children on a field trip that learned about STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) careers.

No other comments were noted.

Adjournment

Chair Hartke indicated that the next meeting of the Regional Council Executive Committee would take place on March 17, 2025. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.