

Minutes of the
Maricopa Association of Governments
Regional Council
September 24, 2025

This meeting was conducted in person and virtually via Zoom

[Video recording of the meeting](#)

| MEMBERS | ATTENDANCE |
|---|-------------------|
| Apache Junction: Mayor Chip Wilson | In Person |
| Avondale: Mayor Mike Pineda | Not in Attendance |
| Buckeye: Mayor Eric Orsborn, Vice Chair | Not in Attendance |
| Carefree: Mayor John Crane | In Person |
| Cave Creek: Mayor Robert Morris | Virtual |
| Chandler: Mayor Kevin Hartke | In Person |
| El Mirage/State Transportation Board: Mayor Alexis Hermosillo, Chair | In Person |
| Florence: Mayor Keith Eaton | In Person |
| Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: President Sandra Pattea | Not in Attendance |
| Fountain Hills: Mayor Gerry Friedel | Virtual |
| Gila Bend: Mayor Tommy Sikes | Virtual |
| Gila River Indian Community: Governor Stephen Roe Lewis | Not in Attendance |
| Gilbert: Mayor Scott Anderson | Virtual |
| Glendale: Mayor Jerry Weiers | In Person |
| Goodyear: Mayor Joe Pizzillo | In Person |
| Guadalupe: Mayor Valerie Molina | Not in Attendance |
| Litchfield Park: Mayor Thomas Schoaf | Virtual |
| Maricopa: Mayor Nancy Smith | Virtual |
| Maricopa County: Supervisor Thomas Galvin | Not in Attendance |
| Mesa: Mayor Mark Freeman | Not in Attendance |
| Paradise Valley: Mayor Mark Stanton | Not in Attendance |
| Peoria: Mayor Jason Beck | Not in Attendance |
| Phoenix: Vice Mayor Ann O'Brien as Proxy for Mayor Kate Gallego | In Person |
| Pinal County: Supervisor Mike Goodman | Virtual |
| Queen Creek: Council Member Jeff Brown as proxy for Mayor Julia Wheatley, Treasurer | Virtual |
| Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community: President Martin Harvier | Not in Attendance |
| Scottsdale: Mayor Lisa Borowsky | Virtual |
| State Transportation Board: Jenn Daniels | In Person |
| Surprise: Mayor Kevin Sartor | Virtual |
| Tempe: Mayor Corey Woods | Not in Attendance |
| Tolleson: Mayor Juan Rodriguez | Virtual |
| Wickenburg: Mayor BG Bratcher | Virtual |
| Youngtown: Mayor Michael LeVault | Virtual |

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Regional Council was called to order by Chair Hermosillo at 11:31 a.m. Roll call was taken to confirm a quorum of members was present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Hermosillo led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Call to the Audience

Chair Hermosillo indicated that there was one request to speak received for the Call to the Audience.

Dianne Barker expressed support for multimodal transportation and emphasized the need for transportation options that promote health and accessibility. She opposed using international emissions to address local ozone issues, urging local accountability for improving air quality.

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

4. Informational Items

Chair Hermosillo indicated that items 4A through 4G were on the agenda for information only.

She asked if any members had questions or comments regarding these items.

Mayor Eaton requested clarification on items 4D, Regional Truck Parking Study and Plan Update, and 4E, Superstition Vistas Multimodal Transportation Planning Study Update.

Mayor Eaton inquired whether Pinal County, and specifically the Town of Florence, were included in the regional truck parking study, noting that several semi-truck parking areas currently exist north of Florence. Brian Rubin, principal planner, responded that the study examined the entire MAG planning area but was primarily focused on addressing undesignated truck parking within the urban environment. He also noted that previous studies conducted by MAG and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) had emphasized rural communities, and this current study would build upon that earlier work.

Executive Director Ed Zuercher added that staff would be happy to coordinate directly with Florence to gather more information and incorporate local insights into the ongoing study. He encouraged collaboration with Florence staff to identify specific areas of concern or need. Mayor Eaton agreed and noted that as expansion occurs through the

area, some parking issues may naturally resolve, but he appreciated the opportunity for coordination.

Next, Mayor Eaton observed that although Florence is listed as a participating jurisdiction, there were no identified projects south of Arizona Farms Road identified in the Superstition Vistas Multimodal Transportation Planning Study draft recommendations. Hannah Quinsey, senior planner, confirmed explaining that the study area boundary is Arizona Farms Road, and therefore there are no projects recommended south of Arizona Farms Road. She added that the Town of Florence was engaged throughout the study process. She offered to provide specific information on how the 2030- and 2050-year recommended transportation networks could impact the town. She clarified that the study began in 2023 and is now in the final phase of developing and finalizing the recommended networks, with the final report expected later this fall. She also noted that the proposed North-South Corridor, included in the 2050 network recommendations, would pass through the Town of Florence.

With no further questions or comments, Chair Hermosillo moved to the next agenda item.

4A. Loop 101 (Price Freeway) and Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) Bottleneck Study and Corridor Plan Update

This item was on the agenda for information only.

MAG initiated the Loop 101 (Price Freeway) and Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) Bottleneck Study and Corridor Plan in February 2025 to address traffic issues along Loop 101 (Price Freeway) between Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) and US 60, and Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) between Priest Drive and Dobson Road. On average, there are more than four crashes every day in this corridor, creating delays, safety hazards, and uncertainty for drivers. The corridor also experiences congestion that can be attributed to 10 lane drops (locations where lanes end), which force drivers to merge into another lane, creating choke points. In addition, there are eight weaving locations where vehicles must change lanes to enter or exit, adding to congestion and increasing crash risks.

The study is focused on improving safety, enhancing operations, and increasing accessibility throughout the corridor. This agenda item provides an update on the study's progress.

4B. Freeway Life Cycle Program - Project Construction Updates

This item was on the agenda for information only.

The Freeway Life Cycle Program (FLCP) is the management tool for the implementation of freeway and highway projects funded through the dedicated half-cent sales tax for transportation and other revenue sources available to the region. This agenda item

represents an update on freeway projects funded through the program that are currently under construction or will start construction before the end of fiscal year 2026.

4C. ADOT Red Letter Process

This item was on the agenda for information only.

The Regional Council approved the Red Letter Process in 1996 to provide early notification of potential development in planned freeway alignments. Development activities include actions on plans, zoning, and permits. ADOT has forwarded a list of 489 notifications from January 1 to June 30, 2025.

4D. Regional Truck Parking Study and Plan Update

This item was on the agenda for information only.

MAG is currently developing a Regional Truck Parking Study and Plan. The purpose of this study and plan is to obtain a better understanding of current commercial truck parking needs and deficiencies, identify strategies to best address multiple types of truck parking issues, and recommend solutions. In addition to the identification of potential locations for additional truck parking, this study explores both technology-based solutions and the viability of public-private partnerships in the MAG region. This item provides an informational update on project activities to date.

4E. Superstition Vistas Multimodal Transportation Planning Study Update

This item was on the agenda for information only.

In 2023, a strategic planning effort was initiated to provide a coordinated, consensus-driven vision of a multimodal transportation network across jurisdictions in reflection of future development plans and projected growth in north Pinal County. The study area spans approximately 287 square miles within the city of Apache Junction, town of Florence, city of Mesa, town of Queen Creek, Maricopa County, and Pinal County, including land managed by the Arizona State Land Department and adjacent to the Gila River Indian Community. Working with member and partner agencies, the study has developed preliminary transportation system recommendations for the 2030 and 2050 planning horizons. The recommendations were informed by stakeholder input, travel demand model stress testing, reviews of existing plans and capital programs, and input from the study's Technical Advisory Group.

4F. MAG Biannual Public Input and Community Outreach Report: January – July 2025

This item was on the agenda for information only.

The MAG Biannual Public Input and Community Outreach Report details MAG's efforts to engage residents and gather feedback during the second half of fiscal year (FY) 2025. Community input, collected through meetings, surveys, interactive tools, and social media, revealed key concerns regarding transportation safety, access to active transportation options and quality of life. The report demonstrates how this feedback informs MAG initiatives, specifically transportation planning, highlighting the agency's commitment to inclusive, multi-channel outreach.

4G. Sunset of the MAG 9-1-1 Study Committee

This item was on the agenda for information only.

On September 14, 2016, the MAG Management Committee approved the formation of the MAG 9-1-1 Study Committee with the purpose of reviewing a managed service proposal for 9-1-1 service. Since that time, the study committee has reviewed two managed service proposals for 9-1-1 and on January 4, 2024, recommended approval to migrate to state contract service. In January 2024, the MAG Management Committee recommended and the MAG Regional Council approved the transition to state contract services for 9-1-1 service. Transition by the region to state contract service was completed on May 20, 2025. While MAG staff continue to monitor and provide updates on 9-1-1 state and regional 9-1-1 developments, these activities do not require a formalized MAG 9-1-1 Study Committee to facilitate.

***5. Approval of Consent Agenda**

Chair Hermosillo stated that agenda items 5A through 5I were on the Consent Agenda.

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

Chair Hermosillo indicated that there were no requests to speak received for the Consent Agenda.

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

Chair Hermosillo requested a motion to approve the agenda item. Mayor Weiers moved to approve the Consent Agenda for items 5A through 5I, and Mayor Hartke seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Anderson, Mayor Borowsky, Mayor Bratcher, Councilmember Brown, Mayor Crane, Ms. Daniels, Mayor Eaton, Mayor Hartke, Chair Hermosillo, Mayor LeVault, Mayor Morris, Vice Mayor O'Brien, Mayor Pizzillo, Mayor Rodriguez, Mayor Sartor, Mayor Schoaf, Mayor Sikes, Mayor Smith, Mayor Weiers, and Mayor Wilson.

No response was received from Supervisor Goodman and Mayor Friedel.

***5A. Approval of the June 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved the June 25, 2025, meeting minutes.

***5B. Conformity Consultation**

This item was on the agenda for consultation.

MAG is conducting consultation on a conformity assessment for an amendment and administrative modification to the FY 2025-2030 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and MOMENTUM 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The amendment and administrative modification involve changes to several projects, including FLCP projects, General Roadway projects, Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP) projects, and Transit projects. The amendment includes projects that may be categorized as exempt from conformity determinations. The administrative modification includes minor project revisions that do not require a conformity determination.

***5C. New Finding of Conformity for a Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025-2030 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and MOMENTUM 2050 Regional Transportation Plan**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved the new Finding of Conformity for a proposed amendment to the FY 2025-2030 MAG TIP and MOMENTUM 2050 RTP.

On January 22, 2025, the MAG Regional Council approved the FY 2025-2030 MAG TIP. Since that time, a proposed amendment to the TIP and MOMENTUM 2050 RTP includes FLCP projects, General Roadway projects, and ALCP projects. A new conformity analysis for the Maricopa nonattainment areas and Pinal County nonattainment areas has been prepared. The results of the regional emissions analysis for the amendment, when considered together with the TIP and RTP as a whole, indicate that the amendment will not contribute to violations of federal air quality standards. On July 29, 2025, a 30-day agency and public review period began on the conformity analysis and amendment.

***5D. Transportation Improvement Program Project Changes**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2025-2030 MAG TIP, Regional Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Investment Plan (RSTIIP), and MOMENTUM 2050 MAG RTP.

The MAG Regional Council approved the FY 2025-2030 MAG TIP on January 22, 2025, the MOMENTUM 2050 MAG RTP on December 1, 2021, and the RSTIIP on September 27, 2023.

Since approval of the last amendment, additional changes and modifications are needed.

***5E. Transportation Improvement Program Project Changes (Conformity Contingent)**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2025-2030 MAG TIP, RSTIIP, and MOMENTUM 2050 MAG RTP.

The MAG Regional Council approved the FY 2025-2030 MAG TIP on January 22, 2025, the MOMENTUM 2050 MAG RTP on December 1, 2021, and the RSTIIP on September 27, 2023.

Since approval of the last amendment, additional changes and modifications are needed. This set of requested project changes are contingent on a new finding of conformity.

***5F. Administration of the Fiscal Year 2026 Transit Life Cycle Program Memorandum of Understanding**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Valley Metro for administration of the FY 2026 Transit Life Cycle Program (TLCP).

Management of the transit component of the RSTIIP occurs through the TLCP. As part of the RSTIIP development process, the Regional Council approved planning principles that centralized all regional funding decisions and program management within MAG. This shift also was made in state law through the passage of Senate Bill 1102 in 2023. Since FY 2026 includes revenues from both Proposition 400 and Proposition 479, MAG and Valley Metro have worked closely to define TLCP management roles during this transition year. As a result of this collaboration, a MOU has been drafted which articulates that Valley Metro will administer and manage the TLCP for FY 2026 and fulfill the associated statutory responsibilities. This agenda item represents the request to enter into the MOU with Valley Metro for the management of the FY 2026 TLCP.

***5G. Federal Transit Administration Prior Year Funds Preventive Maintenance Programming Update**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved to program \$8,695,476 of FYs 2023 and 2024 Section 5337 funds for preventive maintenance.

The Regional Programming Guidelines for Federal Transit Formula Funds (Guidelines), which were last approved by the MAG Regional Council on June 26, 2024, guide programming decisions for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula funding in the region. The Guidelines outline the process for development of the transit program of projects and establish a priority order by which to program FTA funds. During the development of the FY 2025 Program of Projects, an analysis was done of prior year

apportionments to identify any unprogrammed funds and propose projects for programming any unprogrammed funds. This agenda item reflects a request to program \$8,695,476 of FYs 2023 and 2024 Section 5337 funds apportioned to the region to preventive maintenance.

***5H. Draft Fiscal Year 2025 Transit Program of Projects**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved the draft FY 2025 Program of Projects.

The FTA requires the development of a Program of Projects to outline formula funds allocated to the region and the specific projects for which those funds are programmed. The Program of Projects complements the MAG TIP, detailing how the region's apportioned transit funding will be used.

Amendment seven to the FY 2025-2030 TIP, which includes the FY 2025 Program of Projects, will be available for public comment between August 3 and September 3, 2025. The public notice of public participation activities and time established for public review of and comments on the TIP will satisfy the Program of Projects requirements. This agenda item reflects a request to approve the draft FY 2025 Program of Projects.

***5I. Consultant Selection for the Fiscal Year 2026 Airport Travel Survey**

The Regional Council, by consent, approved WestGroup LLC for the FY 2026 Airport Travel Survey and if negotiations are not successful, MAG pursues negotiations with its second choice, ETC Institute.

The MAG FY 2026-2027 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program and Budget includes \$900,000 for the FY 2026 Airport Travel Survey. The purpose of this project is to survey air passengers, meeters and greeters, and employees at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and Mesa Gateway Airport to collect ground access travel behavior data for updating airport travel submodels in MAG's regional travel forecasting model. A request for proposals was advertised on July 16, 2025, with a total of five proposals received by the August 20, 2025, deadline. On August 27, 2025, an evaluation team met and recommended the selection of WestGroup LLC. Additionally, the evaluation team recommended that if negotiations with WestGroup LLC are not successful, MAG pursue negotiations with the second highest scoring consultant, ETC Institute.

6. Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy

Chair Hermosillo requested Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, Executive Director of NAU's Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy, and Special Advisor to the President on PreK-12 Initiatives, Dr. Chad Gestson, to present this item. This item was on the agenda for information and discussion.

Chair Hermosillo explained that when the Regional Council sunset the Economic Development Committee two years ago, it was determined that issues of regional economic and workforce importance would be brought directly before the council when appropriate.

She welcomed Dr. Gestson and commended him for his leadership in advancing youth engagement and workforce development across the state, highlighting his role in bridging education and economic opportunity to prepare students for lifelong success.

Dr. Gestson began by stating that the Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy is a nonpartisan, solutions-focused initiative housed at Northern Arizona University. The institute collaborates with schools, industry leaders, chambers of commerce, and all levels of government. He explained that while society and technology have changed dramatically, the structure of public education has largely remained the same. Despite serving over 1.1 million students statewide—800,000 in Maricopa County—Arizona continues to face persistent headlines about lagging educational outcomes. Dr. Gestson noted that debates over funding levels, teacher pay, and school choice often overshadow the broader issue that education has not kept pace with the modern world.

Dr. Gestson illustrated that the model of schooling, from curriculum to classroom design, still reflects the early 20th century. Only minor changes, such as expanded world language offerings and new electives, have occurred over the last century. While industries evolve rapidly, education systems remain stagnant.

To address this challenge, Dr. Gestson outlined the institute's approach of forming a statewide coalition of over 200 partners across 15 counties, from government, education, and the private sector, to modernize Arizona's educational system and prepare graduates for today's workforce. He emphasized that change must occur both "top down and bottom up," involving state policies as well as local collaboration among educators, parents, businesses, and municipalities.

Dr. Gestson emphasized that schools must evolve to prepare students for the future of work, where automation, technology, and new career pathways demand different skills and mindsets. He explained that education reform often begins at the systems level, through new statutes or graduation requirements, but rarely reaches students meaningfully. Instead, the institute is reversing that model, starting with what students need to succeed in today's and tomorrow's economy, then aligning schools and systems around those needs.

Dr. Gestson introduced the institute's "three big bets" for transforming education: the Profile, the Playbook, and the Sandbox. The Profile centers education around the student. The institute has spent over a year developing the State 48 Graduate Profile, which defines the essential knowledge, skills, and mindsets Arizona students need. Thousands of stakeholders—including students, parents, educators, industry leaders, and community organizations—contributed through surveys, focus groups, and convenings. The profile

emphasizes preparing students for multiple post-graduation pathways: enrollment in postsecondary education, employment in sustainable careers, enlistment in military or service organizations, and entrepreneurship. Dr. Gestson stressed that these paths are not mutually exclusive, students may pursue several over their lifetimes. The Playbook provides local communities and schools with tools to move from “School 1.0” to “School 2.0.” Developed in partnership with the Center for the Future of Arizona, it will include real-world examples from Arizona schools that have successfully implemented innovative models integrating curriculum, internships, and technology. The Sandbox is a proposed piece of legislation inspired by Arizona’s regulatory sandbox for emerging industries. It would allow schools to test and pilot new educational models, graduation requirements, and learning structures to prepare for the future of education in 2030 and beyond.

Dr. Gestson also discussed the institute’s focus on artificial intelligence (AI), explaining that the organization published Arizona’s AI Guidance for K–12 Education to help schools navigate both the risks and opportunities of AI integration in learning.

He concluded by inviting mayors and city leaders to engage with the institute, connect their local school districts and chambers of commerce, and adopt the State 48 Graduate Profile once finalized.

Chair Hermosillo asked if any members had questions or comments regarding the agenda item.

Mayor Freeman thanked Dr. Gestson for his partnership in Mesa, highlighting Mesa’s role in education innovation, referencing the leadership of the former superintendent and the creation of new educational programs such as the Bezos Academy and Polaris Academy. He encouraged continued collaboration between the university and municipalities to expand the institute’s footprint statewide. Dr. Gestson acknowledged the partnerships with Maricopa Community Colleges, state universities, and other institutions, emphasizing the institute’s statewide mission.

Ms. Daniels expressed admiration for the project’s ambition, noting her personal connection to education as a parent of four children following very different career paths. She appreciated the initiative’s recognition that the current “one-size-fits-all” model of education does not meet the diverse needs of students. She asked how the institute plans to engage parents, who can often be hesitant to embrace change. Dr. Gestson responded that while parents have participated in surveys and focus groups, their involvement must deepen, as student and parent engagement are essential to lasting reform.

Vice Mayor O’Brien shared her perspective as a former school board member. She asked if the Institute had looked into the state statute about the dropout age of 16, reflecting that it is outdated given the accessibility of alternative educational options. Dr. Gestson thanked her for the point, noting that the institute aims to build a coalition capable of addressing such policy challenges. Vice Mayor O’Brien also referenced promising Helios Foundation data showing that students in career and technical education programs have

higher graduation and postsecondary success rates. Dr. Gestson agreed, noting that the institute is housed at Helios and shares its commitment to expanding relevant, hands-on learning.

Mayor Borowsky asked if the Institute is working with the Scottsdale Unified School District. Dr. Gestson confirmed that the superintendent and other Scottsdale educators are actively engaged in the initiative.

With no further questions or comments, Chair Hermosillo thanked Dr. Gestson for his presentation.

***7. Air Quality Update Clean Air Act Section 179B(b) Demonstration**

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

Mr. Poppen began by recognizing the Regional Council's efforts over the past three years to address ozone challenges in the region. He noted two unique difficulties: approximately 80 percent of ozone impacting the region originates outside the region and is beyond local control, and reductions in local emissions have not resulted in lower ozone concentrations. To help address these difficulties, Clean Air Act Section 179B(b) provides a mechanism to account for, and not be penalized by, the ozone impact from international emissions. Mr. Poppen credited the leadership of past chairs in engaging federal officials on the issue, which allowed MAG to pursue the relief provided under Clean Air Act Section 179B(b) and prepare the MAG 2025 Clean Air Act Section 179B(b) Retrospective Demonstration of the Impact of International Emissions on Ozone Concentrations in the Maricopa Nonattainment Area for acceptance and submittal to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator.

Mr. Poppen explained that the Maricopa nonattainment area is currently classified as Moderate and was required to meet the EPA ozone standard by August 3, 2024. The EPA ozone standard is 70 parts per billion (ppb), while current ozone monitor data in the nonattainment area indicate a value of 80 ppb, which is in violation of the standard. EPA approval of the MAG 2025 Clean Air Act Section 179B(b) Retrospective Demonstration would allow the region to retain Moderate status and avoid reclassification to Serious, if it can be demonstrated that the nonattainment area would have met the standard by August 3, 2024, but for emissions from international sources. He highlighted that reclassification to Serious would impose counterproductive sanctions on businesses, industry, and highway funding, worsening congestion and air quality. Remaining at Moderate allows the region to focus on meaningful local strategies without unnecessary sanctions and control measures.

Mr. Poppen reported that all technical analyses for the 179B(b) demonstration are now complete and are included in the MAG 2025 Clean Air Act Section 179B(b) Retrospective Demonstration recommended for acceptance and submittal to the EPA. He noted that

EPA is currently under a proposed consent decree with the Center for Biological Diversity, requiring EPA to take action by February 3, 2026, on whether or not the Maricopa nonattainment area attained the ozone standard by the Moderate area attainment date of August 3, 2024. It is anticipated that EPA approval of the MAG 179B(b) demonstration would occur before February 3, 2026, allowing EPA to determine that the Maricopa nonattainment area attained the standard by August 3, 2024, but for the impact from international emissions and keeping the nonattainment area in a Moderate status.

Mr. Poppen stated that the technical analyses in the 179B(b) demonstration were prepared with consultant help from Ramboll Americas, under a contract authorized by Regional Council. He noted that Ramboll had produced similar analyses for Imperial County, California, and the State of Utah as well, resulting in EPA approval of Imperial County's demonstration of the ozone impact of international emissions from Mexico.

Mr. Poppen explained the primary method for determining the impact of international emissions on ozone concentrations in the Maricopa nonattainment area through an analysis technique called source apportionment modeling. Source apportionment modeling was used to trace the ozone impact of international emissions to each of the 25 ozone monitor locations in the nonattainment area. Results showed that average ozone concentrations would drop from 75 ppb to 60 ppb when manmade international emissions were excluded, demonstrating a 15 ppb contribution. The impact was consistent when accounting for wildfires. At the worst-performing nonattainment area monitor, which has an ozone concentration of 80 ppb, the ozone standard would still be met with an ozone concentration of 66 ppb once international contributions were removed. Mr. Poppen stated that source apportionment modeling demonstrates that attainment of the standard in 2023 is achieved when international emissions are removed.

Mr. Poppen then described seasonal patterns of ozone impact from international emissions. From April to June, intercontinental emissions from Asia and Europe dominate, while from July to September, emissions from Mexico are more influential due to monsoon winds. Altogether, emissions from intercontinental sources and Mexico contribute an average of about 15 ppb of ozone throughout the ozone season (April-September). When considering the validity of the modeling results, he explained that the results were highly reliable and showed strong correlation with observed ozone levels. He stated that modeling performance is representative of observed ozone concentrations.

Mr. Poppen explained that additional analyses supported the source apportionment findings. EPA's own 2021 source apportionment modeling estimated an ozone impact of 8.5 ppb from manmade international emissions to the Maricopa nonattainment area in calendar year 2020. He noted that the EPA modeling could not accurately assign an additional 5 ppb of ozone to either international or domestic emissions. He indicated that if this were included as international emissions, EPA's modeled estimate could be as high as 13.6 ppb. Mr. Poppen noted that the 2020 ozone concentration, including wildfires, was 79 ppb in the nonattainment area. He stated that removing the EPA-estimated minimum contribution of manmade international emissions in 2020 results in attainment

of the standard in 2020. He emphasized that both MAG's modeling and EPA's earlier modeling align.

Mr. Poppen noted that days when the ozone standard was exceeded were also examined as an additional analysis. Four dominant airflow pathways were identified on exceedance days: winds from the north, southeast, south, and west. Three of these pathways--west, southeast, and south--included potential transport from Mexico to the nonattainment area. Two of the four pathways indicated potential transport from Asia and intercontinental regions to the nonattainment area. Eighty percent of exceedance days involved air passing over Mexico. Mr. Poppen indicated that simply removing exceedance days impacted by wildfires and where transport from Mexico occurs would show attainment of the standard at all but one monitor in our region. He stated that a key reason for consideration of emissions from Mexico is because EPA has already approved the Imperial County demonstration and acknowledged that a significant number of region's exceedances occurred during the monsoon season in July and August.

Mr. Poppen explained that emission trends were also analyzed. Between 2017 and 2023, nitrogen oxide emissions in the nonattainment area fell 38 percent, while emissions from northern Mexico increased six percent and remained six to 11 times higher than the Maricopa nonattainment area despite only having double the population. Similar patterns were also observed for volatile organic compound emissions. Mr. Poppen indicated that the increase in emissions from Mexico may help explain why local ozone concentrations increased in the nonattainment area despite reductions in local emissions. He concluded that all of these analyses provide overwhelming technical evidence that the nonattainment area would have met the ozone standard by August 3, 2024, but for manmade international emissions.

Chair Hermosillo asked if any members had questions or comments regarding the agenda item.

Mayor Hartke asked what lessons could be learned to decrease the region's contribution to ozone pollution. Mr. Poppen responded that the analysis provided a baseline to distinguish controllable local emissions from outside influences. He noted recent use of advanced ozone monitoring equipment, Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) radar, to better understand when ozone originates locally versus from international transport or wildfires.

Mayor Hartke also asked if the EPA's approval of the 179B(b) demonstration would be permanent. Mr. Poppen confirmed it would, unless the Clean Air Act changed.

Mayor Hartke commended the work as groundbreaking and stressed that the goal is not to excuse unhealthy air but to better understand sources while protecting economic growth and reducing congestion.

Mayor Pizzillo echoed these comments, expressing appreciation for the federal government's recognition of international impacts. He stressed that the region, particularly its economic growth, should not be penalized for outside emissions and commended staff for their research and data analysis.

Ms. Daniels noted that while many stakeholders have discussed the issue, the members know that Mr. Poppen and his staff have carried the heavy workload, and she thanked them for their efforts.

Chair Hermosillo echoed Ms. Daniels' comment.

Mr. Poppen acknowledged and thanked MAG's modeling staff for their technical expertise and professionalism, and for member agencies' commitment to this work. He highlighted that MAG employs five air quality modelers, keeping the MAG region on the leading edge of technical expertise.

Vice Mayor O'Brien stated for the record:

"Phoenix is in support of the 179B(b) demonstration. Within the next year, we would like MAG, as the designated air quality planning agency, to report to Regional Council how it will continue to research and develop a report that better understands the sources of ozone, not just from outside the region but also locally. Increasing ozone concentrations in our region pose significant health risks and we should be committed to finding solutions locally and within our control to improve our air quality."

Chair Hermosillo indicated that there was one request to speak received for the agenda item.

Ms. Barker opposed the requested action. While she acknowledged MAG's planning and modeling work, she argued that all transportation modes and individuals should be held responsible for their contributions to negative air quality and the impact to public health.

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

Chair Hermosillo requested a motion for the agenda item. Mayor Hartke moved to accept the MAG 2025 Clean Air Act Section 179B(b) Retrospective Demonstration of the Impact of International Emissions on Ozone Concentrations in the Maricopa Nonattainment Area for submittal to the EPA Administrator, and Mayor Freeman seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Anderson, Mayor Borowsky, Mayor Bratcher, Councilmember Brown, Mayor Crane, Ms. Daniels, Mayor Eaton, Mayor Friedel, Supervisor Goodman, Mayor Hartke, Chair Hermosillo, Mayor LeVault, Mayor Morris, Vice Mayor O'Brien, Mayor Pizzillo, Mayor Sartor, Mayor Schoaf, Mayor Sikes, Mayor Smith, Mayor Weiers, and Mayor Wilson.

No response was received from Mayor Rodriguez.

8. Resolution of Support for October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Chair Hermosillo introduced Amy St. Peter, director of community initiatives, to present the item on behalf of Tempe Vice Mayor Doreen Garlid, who was unable to attend due to illness. This item was on the agenda for action.

Ms. St. Peter explained that the purpose of the presentation was to invite members' participation and support of events throughout October in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, provide resources for participation, present a resolution of support for action, and arrange a group photo following the vote.

Ms. St. Peter noted that she was speaking on behalf of the Community Initiatives Coordinating Committee, formed by Regional Council earlier this year, and was joined by Director Tonya Hamilton and Sandra Mucino of the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family. She emphasized the severe and wide-ranging impacts of domestic violence, including harm to victims, destruction of families, threats to community safety and stability, workplace productivity losses, and increased costs to healthcare and criminal justice systems. She highlighted the regional approach MAG has taken for 26 years, stressing the importance of collaboration to strengthen the response to domestic violence.

Ms. St. Peter stated that this year's focus is on late-life domestic violence, given its increasing prevalence. Ms. St. Peter explained that before the pandemic, one in 10 older adults reported abuse, a number that has since risen to one in five. She described how isolation makes late-life domestic violence difficult to detect and address. MAG continues to partner with the Governor's Office and the Arizona Department of Economic Security, using federal grant funding to provide training and strengthen the system-level response.

Ms. Hamilton described the work of the Governor's Office of Faith, Youth, and Family, including grant-writing and overseeing nine councils and commissions. She explained that the office works on upstream prevention, education, and awareness, including long-standing efforts in domestic violence education.

Ms. Mucino then provided details on the statewide campaign to light Arizona purple, the 11th annual domestic violence awareness month event. The campaign amplifies resources available to survivors and encourages community engagement. This year's activities will include speakers, an awareness walk, and a resource fair, as well as a new rock painting activity inspired by the phrase "heal when you find your rock," symbolizing healing for survivors when they find someone who they can trust. She shared flyers and invited participation in the October 4, 2025, event.

Ms. St. Peter closed by explaining that the Regional Domestic Violence Council had dissolved and evolved into the Community Initiatives Coordinating Committee, deploying subject matter experts to help plan this year's awareness activities. She emphasized that the resolution of support honors victims, survivors, and those delivering safety and justice. She noted other domestic violence awareness activities, including securing council approval of support, and she encouraged communities to plan and share events. She noted that resources are available online and encouraged members to submit photos and activities to be included on the regional calendar.

Chair Hermosillo asked if any members had questions or comments regarding the agenda item.

Mayor Weiers noted that despite awareness efforts for over a decade, the problem appears to have worsened. He asked why the crisis had doubled and whether current approaches were sufficient. Ms. St. Peter responded that abuse increased during the pandemic because victims were isolated at home, shelters saw reduced use due to fears of the virus, and social bonds that normally provide support were weakened. She acknowledged that recovery is ongoing and emphasized the need to address both domestic violence and the broader conditions that allow it to persist. Mayor Weiers emphasized the need to identify a solution.

Ms. Daniels added that increased reporting may explain part of the rise in statistics, as victims who previously remained silent are now seeking help. She noted that data must be understood in context, with stories behind the numbers that could show progress in resource utilization. She emphasized the need to keep discussing domestic violence and providing resources.

Chair Hermosillo echoed Ms. Daniels' comments.

Mayor Hartke shared that Chandler recently hosted its 17th annual domestic violence awareness event, which highlighted the role of technology in enabling abuse. He stressed that this growing challenge underscores the importance of continued focus.

Mayor Eaton expressed gratitude for MAG's efforts and for the symbolic pin provided to members, noting the importance of visible support for the cause.

Chair Hermosillo indicated that there were no requests to speak received for the agenda item.

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

Chair Hermosillo requested a motion for the agenda item. Mayor Eaton moved to approve the 2025 Resolution of Support for October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and Mayor Wilson seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Anderson, Mayor Borowsky, Mayor Bratcher, Councilmember Brown, Mayor Crane, Ms. Daniels, Mayor Eaton, Mayor Hartke, Chair Hermosillo, Mayor LeVault, Mayor Morris, Vice Mayor O'Brien, Mayor Pizzillo, Mayor Sartor, Mayor Schoaf, Mayor Sikes, Mayor Smith, Mayor Weiers, and Mayor Wilson.

No response was received from Mayor Friedel, Supervisor Goodman, and Mayor Rodriguez.

Ex officio member Ms. Daniels from the State Transportation Board did not vote on this item.

9. Regional Active Transportation Plan Update

In the interest of time, Chair Hermosillo requested this item be postponed until the next meeting.

10. Executive Director's Report

Chair Hermosillo introduced Mr. Zuercher to report on this item. This item was on the agenda for information only.

Before proceeding to Mr. Zuercher's report, Chair Hermosillo acknowledged the upcoming leadership transition at MAG. She noted that Mr. Zuercher had been hired as the next City Manager of Phoenix, with his departure from MAG on November 3, 2025. She thanked Mr. Zuercher for his service and stated that, with his impending departure, it was necessary to identify a replacement to ensure continuity in leadership. She commended the strong team that Mr. Zuercher had built over the past two and a half years, expressing confidence that the transition would be orderly and that MAG's work would continue seamlessly.

To initiate the recruitment process, Chair Hermosillo announced a special meeting of the MAG Regional Council Executive Committee. She explained that following this meeting, Regional Council would be notified of any actions taken, which would then be presented for ratification at the next regularly scheduled Regional Council meeting on October 22, 2025. Chair Hermosillo invited members to share their thoughts, questions, or suggestions regarding the transition with her or other members of the Executive Committee before the special meeting.

Mr. Zuercher expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve as MAG's executive director and stated that he looked forward to working with the organization for several more weeks to ensure a smooth transition.

Mr. Zuercher then shared updates on recent MAG activities and accomplishments. He reported that Mayor Crane had participated as a panelist at the Arizona Capitol Times' Morning Scoop event, where he discussed water issues, specifically Colorado River management.

Mr. Zuercher noted that MAG recently held an open house in Gila Bend, focusing on corridor development along Pima Street, part of State Route 85. He also reported that MAG staff had been active throughout the region, presenting to local governments and community groups in Cave Creek, Gila Bend, Maricopa, Queen Creek, and Tolleson.

Mr. Zuercher then announced that MAG had received two national awards from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO). MAG received the award for Outstanding Overall Achievement for a Transportation Management Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for its work on Proposition 479, reflecting the organization's leadership in regional transportation planning and collaboration. He recognized Audra Koester Thomas and John Bullen, along with all MAG staff, for their significant contributions to this achievement.

The second honor was presented to Arminta Syed, who received AMPO's Rising Professional Award, a national recognition given to one individual annually for early-career excellence in metropolitan planning. He explained that her leadership and technical expertise, including her work managing the freeway and transit life cycle programs and initiatives such as the Diamond Grind Pilot Program, were instrumental to MAG's success.

Mr. Zuercher also highlighted the achievements of MAG's modeling team and recognized Daehyun You, Yongzhao Peng, and Haidong Zhu, who represented MAG at the Modeling Mobility Conference in Minneapolis—the premier national conference for transportation modeling.

Next, he reported on the successful convening of the newly formed Community Initiatives Coordinating Committee following recent restructuring approved by the Regional Council. The committee is chaired by Tempe Vice Mayor Doreen Garlid with Chandler Vice Mayor Christine Ellis as vice chair. Fifteen elected officials serve on the committee, coordinating initiatives related to domestic violence and homelessness.

In closing, Mr. Zuercher highlighted Chair Hermosillo's recent public engagements, including at the West Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce and the League of Arizona Cities and Towns Annual Conference.

Chair Hermosillo thanked Mr. Zuercher for his report.

11. Legislative Update

Chair Hermosillo indicated there was no legislative update for this meeting.

12. Request for Future Agenda Items

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

13. Comments from the Committee

Chair Hermosillo asked the members if there were any comments. No comments were made.

Adjournment

Chair Hermosillo indicated that the next meeting of the Regional Council will take place on October 22, 2025. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

* Matters for which the State Transportation Board ex officio members may vote.