

Minutes of the
Maricopa Association of Governments
Regional Council Executive Committee

May 18, 2026

This meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom

[Video recording of the meeting](#)

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Regional Council Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Hermosillo at 12:01 p.m. Roll call was taken to confirm a quorum of members was present.

2. Call to the Audience

No written public comments were received for the Call to the Audience.

3. Informational items

There were no informational items for this meeting.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Chair Hermosillo stated that agenda items 4A through 4D 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.

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 Hartke moved to approve the Consent Agenda for items 4A through 4D, and Mayor Wheatley seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Mark Freeman, Mayor Kate Gallego, Mayor Kevin Hartke, Chair Alexis Hermosillo, Vice Chair Eric Orsborn, Mayor Jerry Weiers, and Mayor Julia Wheatley.

4A. Approval of the January 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved the January 20, 2026, meeting minutes.

4B. Consultant Selection for the FY 2026 Rural Road and University Drive Grade Separation Feasibility Study

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved AECOM Technical Services Inc. for the FY 2026 Rural Road and University Drive Grade Separation Feasibility Study, and if negotiations are not successful, that MAG pursues negotiations with its second choice, Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.

The MAG Fiscal Years (FYs) 2026-2027 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget includes \$300,000 for the FY 2026 Rural Road and University Drive Grade Separation Feasibility Study. The purpose of the project is to evaluate the feasibility of grade separating the existing light rail corridor at multiple at-grade crossings near the University Drive and Rural Road light rail station and to build consensus with stakeholders around potential alternatives. The study will assess technical feasibility, construction staging approaches, operational impacts, safety benefits, costs, user travel delay savings, and travel time reliability improvements once constructed. A request for proposals was advertised, with a total of three proposals received by the March 25, 2026, deadline. On April 6, 2026, an evaluation team comprised of the City of Tempe, Valley Metro, and MAG met and recommended the selection of AECOM Technical Services Inc. Additionally, the evaluation team recommended that if negotiations with AECOM Technical Services Inc. are not successful, MAG pursue negotiations with the second-highest-scoring consultant, Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.

4C. Consultant Selection for the FY 2025 Arizona Sun Cloud – Statewide Implementation and Innovations AID Grant Project

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved High Street Consulting Group LLC for the FY 2025 Arizona Sun Cloud – Statewide Implementation and Innovations AID Grant Project, and if negotiations are not successful, that MAG pursues negotiations with its second choice, Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.

The MAG Fiscal Years (FYs) 2026-2027 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget includes \$1,000,000 for the FY 2025 Arizona Sun Cloud – Statewide Implementation and Innovations AID Grant Project. The purpose of the project is to support the update and statewide expansion of the Sun Cloud Data Portal, a repository for transportation and socioeconomic datasets for the Sun Corridor megaregion, which

currently includes Cochise, Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, and Santa Cruz counties. A request for proposals was advertised, with a total of nine proposals received by the April 9, 2026, deadline. On April 30, 2026, an evaluation team met and recommended the selection of High Street Consulting Group LLC. Additionally, the evaluation team recommended that if negotiations with High Street Consulting Group LLC are not successful, MAG pursue negotiations with the second-highest-scoring consultant, Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.

4D. Consultant Selection for the FY 2026 Regional Travel Demand Model On-Call

The Regional Council Executive Committee, by consent, approved the proposed list of qualified consultants for the FY 2026 Regional Travel Demand Model On-Call.

The MAG Fiscal Years (FYs) 2026-2027 Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Budget includes \$620,000 for the Regional Travel Demand Model On-Call. The on-call contract allows MAG to procure consultant services to provide specialized services for travel forecasting models. The objective of this on-call contract is to focus on the development and improvement of various features for the MAG forecasting models, as well as the development of dashboards and visualization tools for the model outputs. A request for qualifications was advertised, with a total of 12 responses received by the April 22, 2026, deadline. On April 30, 2026, an evaluation team met and recommended approval of a list of qualified consultants.

1. Proposition 479 Transit Life Cycle Program Management and Administration Agreement

Chair Hermosillo requested John Bullen, assistant executive director, present the item. This item was on the agenda for action.

Mr. Bullen provided background on the Regional Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Investment Plan (RSTIIP) related to the extension of the half-cent sales tax under Proposition 479. He noted that the Transit Life Cycle Program (TLCP) is the financial management tool for the transit element of the Plan.

Mr. Bullen stated that transit experienced the most significant changes between Proposition 400 and Proposition 479, including the transfer of TLCP management responsibilities from Valley Metro to MAG under Proposition 479. He shared that the agreement is intended to ensure alignment with the RSTIIP planning principles, which included centralized program management at MAG.

Mr. Bullen outlined the roles of the agencies involved in the TLCP. MAG is responsible for overall TLCP management. Valley Metro administers public transportation funds; operates and maintains bus, paratransit, light rail, and streetcar services; and oversees fares, ADA certification, and short-range planning, among other responsibilities. The City of Phoenix serves as the region's largest bus operator and is the designated recipient of Federal Transit Administration funds.

Mr. Bullen stated that the item before the committee is an agreement among the three signatory agencies outlining each entity's roles and responsibilities, processes for funding allocation, program development and coordination, and the framework for Proposition 479 transit investments. He noted that the agreement complements the 2015 Transit Planning, Programming, and Fund Allocation Agreement.

Mr. Bullen also highlighted ongoing efforts to develop the Proposition 479 TLCP, including preparation of a detailed policies and procedures document, continued coordination between MAG and Valley Metro, and sustained interagency collaboration to ensure alignment throughout program delivery.

Chair Hermosillo requested a motion to approve the agenda item. Vice Chair Orsborn moved to approve the Proposition 479 Transit Life Cycle Program management and administration agreement, and Mayor Freeman seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Mark Freeman, Mayor Kate Gallego, Mayor Kevin Hartke, Chair Alexis Hermosillo, Vice Chair Eric Orsborn, Mayor Jerry Weiers, Mayor Julia Wheatley.

2. **Possible Executive Session for the Receipt of Legal Advice and Consideration of Engagement of Legal Counsel to Advise MAG Regarding Issues Related to the March 23, 2026, Determination of Attainment by the Attainment Date But for International Emissions for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Phoenix-Mesa Nonattainment Area, Arizona (91 Fed. Reg. 13777) (the "EPA Final Rule")**

Chair Hermosillo requested a motion to recess the meeting and go into executive session. Mayor Gallego moved to recess the meeting and go into executive session, and Mayor Freeman seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Mark Freeman, Mayor Kate Gallego, Mayor Kevin Hartke, Chair Alexis Hermosillo, Vice Chair Eric Orsborn, Mayor Jerry Weiers, Mayor Julia Wheatley.

After returning from executive session, Chair Hermosillo requested a motion to authorize and direct the MAG executive director to engage legal counsel to take appropriate legal action concerning the Final Rule, or any challenges thereto, including the filing of any petitions for review, as the need may arise in the future. Mayor Freeman moved and Mayor Wheatley second the motion. Based on legal counsel and feedback from Executive Director Audra Koester Thomas on the intent, Mayors Freeman and Wheatley agreed to amend the motion to authorize and direct the MAG Executive Director the authority to engage legal counsel to intervene in and respond to any future petition for review.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Mayor Mark Freeman, Mayor Kate Gallego, Mayor Kevin Hartke, Chair Alexis Hermosillo, Vice Chair Eric Orsborn, Mayor Jerry Weiers, Mayor Julia Wheatley.

3. 2026 Point in Time Count Results

Chair Hermosillo requested Matt Finley, interim special projects administrator, present the item. This item was on the agenda for information and discussion.

Mr. Finley stated that the federally required Point in Time Count (PIT) provides a one-day snapshot of the number of individuals living in shelters and on the streets throughout Maricopa County. The 2026 PIT count occurred for the night of January 26, 2026. He noted that one of the strengths of the PIT is the ability to evaluate year-over-year trends.

Mr. Finley expressed appreciation for the regional coordination required to conduct the PIT count, noting that every jurisdiction participated and 302 volunteers assisted with data collection.

Mr. Finley highlighted strengths of the PIT process, including the use of technology and data for planning, robust volunteer teams, participant trainings, GIS heat maps, and HUD methodology.

Mr. Finley reported that 9,726 individuals were counted in the 2026 PIT. He emphasized that fewer individuals slept outside this year compared to the previous year, representing a 12 percent decrease in the number of individuals sleeping outside. Additionally, the number of individuals sleeping in a shelter rose by 14 percent this year as compared to the previous year. He also shared that over the past four years, between 2023 and 2026, the overall number of unhoused individuals has remained relatively flat.

Mr. Finley stated that among sheltered individuals, 71 percent were in emergency shelter, 28 percent were in transitional housing, and 1 percent were in safe haven housing. Emergency shelter usage increased by 11 percent from 2025. He provided a regional breakdown of shelter beds, noting that the West Valley provided 5 percent of the region's shelter beds, the East Valley provided 17 percent, and the Central Valley provided 78 percent. He also noted that family homelessness increased by 15 percent as compared to 2025.

Mr. Finley explained that the Safe Outdoor Space is a structured outdoor program in Phoenix that provides case management, meals, hygiene services, and pathways out of homelessness. He stated that although the program functions similarly to a shelter, HUD classifies shelter by structure type, resulting in the 201 individuals at the Safe Outdoor Space being included in the unsheltered count.

Mr. Finley noted that the PIT count is a single snapshot and is supplemented by two additional data sources. Monthly Homelessness Data Reports are updated monthly and

posted on the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care website, while System Performance Measures are updated quarterly and posted on the MAG website.

Mr. Finley highlighted future improvements to the PIT process, including expanding technology across cities, encouraging peer-to-peer sharing across the region, strengthening preparation for first-time volunteers and coordinators, and improving real-time outreach tracking.

Mr. Finley summarized key takeaways from the 2026 PIT count, noting that more individuals are accessing shelters, family homelessness is increasing, the overall census is trending flat, and youth and veteran homelessness are trending downward.

Mayor Hartke asked whether PIT numbers had been compared to overall population growth and suggested that the relatively flat trend may indicate a more positive outcome when considered in that context. Mr. Finley stated that staff would look into the comparison and provide additional information for members.

Mr. Finley stated that the PIT results have been shared with jurisdictional staff and HUD and will next be presented to the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care. He noted the results will also be distributed to the press, included in the Regional Council packet, presented to the MAG Management Committee and Regional Council in June 2026, and utilized in the HUD annual Continuum of Care funding competition.

With no further questions, Chair Hermosillo continued to the next item.

4. Executive Director's Report

Chair Hermosillo requested Ms. Koester Thomas, executive director, to present the update. This item was on the agenda for information.

Ms. Koester Thomas stated that Environmental Planning Director Matt Poppen and the research team involved in the Ground Level Ozone Research Project are scheduled to present their findings to the Regional Council in August 2026.

5. Legislative Update

Chair Hermosillo requested staff to present the update.

Ms. Koester Thomas indicated there would be no legislative update today.

6. Request for Future Agenda Items

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

7. Comments from the Committee

Chair Hermosillo asked the members if there were any comments. None was noted.

Adjournment

Chair Hermosillo indicated that the next meeting of the Regional Council Executive Committee will take place on June 15, 2026. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Report Parameters

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