

Time Taken to Clear Freeway Crashes Drastically Reduced

Locating DPS Troopers at Traffic Center Pays Off for Motorists

The average time taken to clear a crash site on Maricopa County freeways was reduced by nearly an hour over the past year, helping traffic move more quickly, preventing secondary collisions and potentially saving lives.



The dramatic reduction in clearance times is attributed to a decision one year ago to locate Department of Public Safety (DPS) troopers at the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Traffic Operations Center (TOC).



DPS Trooper Robb Brown monitors freeway activity at the ADOT Traffic Operations Center.

Placing DPS troopers at the TOC began in late 2014 as a three-year pilot program. MAG and ADOT are jointly funding the project, with buy-in from DPS and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).



DPS Director Frank Milstead.

“Despite a 23 percent increase in the number of freeway crashes, the time to clear crashes of all severities was reduced between 48 and 65 percent,” said DPS Director Frank Milstead in announcing the one-year results. “While clearing severe crashes took longer than less serious incidents, they were also cleared more quickly than the year before. On average, the time taken to clear all freeway lanes at crash sites has been reduced by nearly an hour.”

ADOT Director John Halikowski said the success is a result of increased efficiency.

“The DPS troopers at the TOC have direct communication with troopers in the field. They can jointly determine the resources needed at a specific crash scene,” Halikowski said. “This prevents the need for ADOT operators to relay the information to DPS. This means we can mobilize field officers, fire-rescue, ambulances, the appropriate class of tow truck and other resources more quickly. Clearing crash scenes more quickly reduces the risk of secondary crashes, furthering our important goal of public safety.”

MAG Chair W.J. “Jim” Lane, mayor of Scottsdale, noted that the reduction in traffic delay not only saves lives but saves money in terms of potential lost productivity. “MAG estimates that the region has saved \$165 million in lost productivity over the first year of the pilot project,” said Mayor Lane. “These findings

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Message From the Chair



Mayor W.J. "Jim" Lane,
City of Scottsdale

During our recent Joint Planning Advisory Council meeting, I was fascinated to learn about the collaboration effort six Utah agencies went through to develop a Unified Transportation Plan for the Wasatch Front Corridor. This later led to a statewide unified plan. The effort drew in the support of the transportation planning organizations, the business community and the public. At the JPAC meeting in Tucson, three of the leaders involved in the plan enthusiastically communicated the approach and tactics state and regional leaders used to bring the state stakeholders together.

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), the Utah Transit Authority, and Utah's four metropolitan planning organizations jointly developed the plan. The unified plan addresses anticipated 30-year needs for road capacity and maintenance as well as transit improvements and operations for the state's urban and rural areas. At the JPAC meeting, we heard from the director of UDOT, the executive director of the Wasatch Front Regional Council, and the president and CEO of the Salt Lake Chamber.

As noted by the Utah presenters, competition between Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), state DOTs and transit agencies can create inefficiencies in transportation planning, project prioritization and funding. On the other

hand, collaboration promotes efficiency, effective planning, and streamlined project delivery. The Utah agencies agreed to integrate their individual regional transportation plans into a single Unified Transportation Plan for the whole state. The leaders stressed that they do not seek consensus on every point, but rather collaborate on shared goals and objectives.

The Utah planners recognized that the success of one transportation mode benefits the entire transportation system, just as the success of each region benefits the entire state. The process not only helped each of the MPOs create better, more coordinated plans, it also generated support for significant investment in transportation projects. In fact, voters in 10 out of 17 counties supported funding for the plan.

The formula is clear. When all of the transportation agencies agree on the most-needed projects and clearly communicate the benefits of the projects, businesses, residents and elected officials feel more confident about supporting the plan and the investments needed.

During the JPAC meeting, we agreed to form a stakeholder group to explore a similar Unified Plan for the Sun Corridor and to work with ADOT on the transportation system as a whole and create a single vision for Arizona's transportation infrastructure. 



MAGAZine is a quarterly newsletter of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). It focuses on the issues and concerns of the cities, towns and tribal communities of the MAG region. If you know of a friend or colleague who would like to receive MAGAZine, please call the MAG office, (602) 254-6300.

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Our Community leadership understands that with our water settlement and its partnership with Salt River Project (SRP), we must have larger civic involvement with our neighboring communities by coming to the table with solutions to help solve problems that impact all our communities. The partnership between the Gila River Indian Community and Salt River Project has the potential to grow even more. We had talks about energy opportunities on the reservation, which include solar power and other green technologies, as well as other potential opportunities that can provide our tribal communities resources that are strategically aligned with our values.

—Gila River Indian Community Governor Stephen Roe Lewis

The Chandler Fire, Health and Medical Department is partnering with the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Healthcare System on an innovative six-month pilot project that seeks to improve healthcare outcomes for thousands of area veterans. Through this program, we are connecting patients with the people and the care that they need—and that will make a huge difference in the lives of Chandler veterans.

—Chandler Mayor Jay Tibshraeny



In looking ahead to serving as chair of the Regional Domestic Violence Council, I hope we are all cognizant of the instances of abuse year-round. We talk about the signs and places for support each year during the month created to heighten awareness. Like many of society's issues, domestic violence does not follow any calendar. It can happen at any time, anywhere. Let's always keep that in mind and remember the services that are available at all times.

—Apache Junction Vice Mayor Robin Barker

Maricopa County believes in responsible fiscal management. The Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and the town of Gilbert have entered into a cooperative agreement (the "Entente Program") that allows both agencies to share resources to perform routine or emergency highway maintenance services. The Entente Program provides MCDOT and regional partners a more efficient model to continue providing connections that improve lives.

—Maricopa County Supervisor Denny Barney



Nominations Open for 2016 Desert Peaks Awards



Maricopa Association of Governments
2016 Desert Peaks Awards
CALL FOR ENTRIES
Entry Deadline: Friday March 11, 2016

Have a regional project that deserves recognition?

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is accepting nominations for the 2016 Desert Peaks Awards. Nomination forms are available for download online at: <https://www.azmag.gov/Projects/Project.asp?CMSID=1083>.

MAG established the Desert Peaks Awards in 1998 to honor projects and individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to regionalism. There are six Desert Peaks Award categories. They include Public Partnership, Public Private Partnership, Professional Service, Regional Partnership, Outstanding Economic Development Champion, and Regional Excellence.

The entry deadline is 5:00 p.m., Friday, March 11, 2016. The Desert Peaks Awards will be held at 5:30 p.m. on June 22, 2016 at the Phoenix Airport Marriott, 1101 North 44th Street, Phoenix. 🏞️

Regional Profile: Mayor John Giles



Mayor John Giles,
City of Mesa



Mesa's Mayor a "Marathon Man"

He calls it the most fun job he can imagine.

"Most days I come to work early, and I go home late, and I go to bed saying, 'wow, that was a lot of fun. I got to do a lot of things I never imaged I was going to get to do,'" says Mesa Mayor John Giles. The mayor is heading into the last year of the term vacated by former Mayor Scott Smith, and enjoying every minute.

"We are a big city, and there are a lot of things going on, a lot of very diverse issues that we are dealing with," Giles says. "At the same time, by virtue of being a big city, we have a lot of resources that allow us to be thoughtful and significant in the way that we attack challenges. That is a compelling mission to be involved with. Every day is different, but every day is also very fun and challenging. It has been a great experience and I'm looking forward to doing it for as long as I can."

A former city council member, Giles thought he had gotten public service out of his system. But when the opportunity to become mayor presented itself, the Mesa native jumped in.



Mayor John Giles
at the inaugural
Ironman Arizona.

"It's my home town. I always felt like I had a personal relationship with this place and identified with it. So the idea of being able to work full time to make it a better place, improve its image and the amenities here, the more I thought about it, I realized there is nothing I would rather do than this job. It comes down to love of my home town, as sappy as that sounds."



Mayor John Giles (waving) and his crew at the St. George Ironman.

Mayor Giles has identified three key focus areas for his first term in office. One includes participating in the Mayor's Challenge to End Veterans' Homelessness. Another he calls "Downtown Life," which supports transit oriented development through Mesa's second downtown light rail extension. Then there is his top priority: education.

"City government does not specifically have education on our plate of responsibilities. But I think it is such an important issue that our community faces that we clearly have a role to play, to be supportive of our K-12 districts and of our post-secondary districts."

Mayor Giles formed the Early Childhood Education Task Force to address the gap in learning before preschoolers enter kindergarten.

"The model that we have now for education—and for public funding of education—is outdated," states Giles. "If a kid shows up for the first time ever in a classroom on his first day of kindergarten, he is

way behind where he needs to be. And early childhood education is not as robust as it needs to be. We need to do more as a region."

As for ending veterans' homelessness, Mayor Giles has been selected to co-chair a national bipartisan effort to engage communities across the country in the effort. The collaborative effort between the White House and the U.S. Conference of Mayors will build upon the success of the Mayors Challenge to End Veterans Homelessness that has been initiated in more than 850 cities. Mesa has been able to take 70 homeless veterans off the street into permanent supportive housing.

Mayor Giles credits the efforts of the city of Phoenix and Mayor Greg Stanton, who helped lay the groundwork for Mesa's program. But he adds that Mesa has always been committed to helping the less fortunate.

"A lot of the major social service agencies in the state of Arizona got their start in Mesa, because

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Mayor John Giles with his wife Dawn and family. (Photo by Ivan Martinez)

Mayor Giles (continued)

that has just always been part of the character of who we are as a community. I think the emphasis on helping homeless veterans is the latest manifestation of that,” he says.

He is even more proud of what he calls the amazing place Mesa has become.

“We are a standalone city. We are not in Phoenix’s or anybody else’s shadow. We have a lot of resources, a lot of great employers, a lot of great education opportunities, a downtown with a lot of character. At the same time, I think we have been able to maintain a little bit of a small city atmosphere,” says Mayor Giles. He notes that Mesa is one of the first eight cities to participate in Bloomberg Philanthropy’s “What Works Cities” initiative. The program encourages cities to use existing data in planning and setting goals.

“We are changing the culture of our organization to be very focused on using data to be more strategic and efficient,” he says.

Mayor Giles says many of his fellow Regional Council members may be surprised to learn that he speaks fluent Korean, having served as a missionary there. With

25 years under his belt practicing law, he often represents the local Korean community as an attorney through nonprofit work.

But perhaps the most astounding revelation is his experience in endurance running. Giles has completed two full Ironman competitions, 20 marathons and four Boston Marathons—the last one the year following the bombing.

“I, like a lot of people, was so offended by the bombing that when it happened I just felt compelled to go back and do it again, just to show support for the event.”

While he entered marathoning as a “bucket list thing,” Mayor Giles says it became addictive. It was also a social experience and a way to spend time with friends. But he agrees there is likely a character trait shared by people drawn to endurance events—like a “dog with a bone” that won’t let go. He hopes that trait serves him well as mayor.

“I think people are starting to understand that I am not good at taking ‘no’ for an answer,” he laughs. “I’ll just keep asking the question or find a way to get something done rather than accept defeat.”

Transit Study Identifies Plan for Southeast Valley

A “menu of concepts,” ranging from improving current service to mid- and long-term solutions. That is how a transit study sums up its recommendations for improving transit in the Southeast Valley.

The Southeast Valley Transit System Study was a two-year effort to analyze transit services and ridership demand in areas with current service and areas that hope to implement transit. The study was a joint effort between MAG and Valley Metro. It included the cities and towns of Apache Junction, Chandler, Florence, Gilbert, Guadalupe, Maricopa, Mesa, Phoenix, Queen Creek, and Tempe, as well as parts of Maricopa County, Pinal County, and the Gila River Indian Community.

“The study identified how to make current and planned transit services in the study area more efficient,” said Mesa Mayor John Giles. “It focused on a performance-based approach that will connect areas within the Southeast Valley to each other and to planned improvements such as high-capacity transit,” he said.

The study first looked at ways to improve the existing system. Recommendations included maximizing the benefits of a “grid” network, improving frequency where warranted, using bus service to leverage rail investment, streamlining alignments, reducing duplication of routes, and matching service investment to demand.

The mid-term analysis looked at how to expand or fill gaps in the existing transit network by 2025, with some expansion into high-growth areas. Recommendations included increasing service frequency on productive routes; exploring new service types to provide service in low-ridership areas or as a lower cost way to expand service to new areas; and expanding service to the east and the south as population, employment, and transit demand grow.

For long-term recommendations, the study looked at how to extend transit services within the Southeast Valley to areas of future projected growth and providing connections to communities not immediately adjacent to existing transit service. Key elements included “filling in the grid” to maximize connectivity, expanding service to the east and southeast, and implementing new express and other commuter services to meet demand. 

Final Recommendations on COMPASS Study

Addressing bottlenecks. Eliminating nonessential driveways. Planning for commuter rail. Those were a few of the key recommendations of a study focused on the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor.



The US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization, Access Management Plan and Systems Study (COMPASS) was launched in 2012.

The study came at the request of elected leaders in El Mirage, Glendale, Maricopa County, Peoria, Phoenix, Surprise, and Youngtown. The goal was to preserve Grand Avenue as a priority corridor that remained a state highway under the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT).



Phoenix Mayor
Greg Stanton

Grand Avenue passes through six separate cities. As the area has developed, the corridor has become more and more congested. “Grand was starting to function more like an arterial street, and ADOT was considering turning the facility over to the local jurisdictions,” noted Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, vice chair of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). “We knew that if we wanted it to remain a state highway under ADOT control, we needed to take a hard look at how we could improve the corridor so it works more efficiently. The study recommendations will help us keep the character of Grand as a flowing corridor that can move a lot of vehicles,” he said.

The study team focused on four alternatives: continue with planned improvements from the Regional Transportation Plan; reconsider the US-60 Grand Avenue Expressway option; plan for commuter rail with operational improvements; and identify other high capacity transit options.



Grand Avenue at 51st Avenue and Bethany Home Road intersection.

Staff reported that neither the expressway option nor the other high capacity transit option met the needs for the corridor. The study recommended:

- Establishing a corridor access management system.
- Continuing with improvements in the Regional Transportation Plan.
- Addressing remaining bottlenecks and congestion points.
- Planning for commuter rail with operational improvements.

A key change for the corridor could be consolidating 429 driveways along the corridor to only 230 access points.

“We know one issue is caused by slowdowns as drivers enter or exit the hundreds of driveways on the corridor,” said Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers, chair of the MAG Transportation Policy Committee. “The study identified many driveways and street connections that could be removed or consolidated to improve traffic flow.”



Glendale Mayor
Jerry Weiers

“Grand Avenue really is critical to all of the cities that it passes through, and as our cities grow and develop, it becomes more and more critical that we address the issue of congestion along this corridor,” said Weiers. “I look forward to working with my colleagues to meet the transportation needs of our community.”

Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott is pleased the study recommended commuter rail and other high capacity transit options for further exploration.

“The West Valley is hungry for commuter rail and other transit choices,” said Wolcott. “Grand Avenue is the most direct corridor for providing those options,” she said.



Surprise Mayor
Sharon Wolcott

Wolcott noted that the recommendations are only concepts at this point. Design and environmental clearances are the next steps, with required local, state and federal agency approvals. 

Developer Selected for South Mountain Freeway

Largest Highway Project in State History to be Constructed as Public-Private Partnership

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has selected a preferred developer for the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway. The freeway remains on track for construction to begin in summer 2016 as the largest-ever highway project in the state.

This is the first highway public-private partnership in Arizona. While the South Mountain Freeway will not be a toll road, the public-private partnership will allow ADOT to build the freeway at a faster pace and lower cost.

After an unsolicited public-private partnership proposal was submitted in 2013, ADOT sought proposals from qualified teams vying to develop the 22-mile-long freeway. The freeway is the last piece of the Loop 202 system and a vital direct link between the West Valley and East Valley. From the initial five proposals submitted, three finalists were selected to advance in the selection process.

Following an extensive review that included representatives from ADOT, the Federal Highway Administration, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and City of Phoenix, Connect 202 Partners was chosen as the “best value” developer. Key members of the development team include Fluor Enterprises Inc., Granite Construction Co., and Ames Construction Inc., with Parsons Brinckerhoff as the lead designer.

“The South Mountain Freeway is a critical piece of the MAG freeway program,” said Scottsdale Mayor and MAG Regional Council Chair W.J. “Jim” Lane. “The freeway has been included in the voter-



A visualization of the South Mountain Freeway can be viewed at azdot.gov/SouthMountainFreeway

approved Regional Transportation Plan since 1985. It will provide improved mobility for residents in the MAG region. The design, construction and maintenance of the freeway by a private developer is a unique and innovative approach to delivering this important project.”

All three finalists were encouraged to use innovation and develop alternative concepts to save time and money, while adhering to all environmental commitments. The goal is to create an innovative partnership in which a private developer will not only design and construct the freeway, but maintain the new highway for 30 years.

This public-private partnership will reduce costs to taxpayers while accelerating construction. Typically, a project of this magnitude would be split into several smaller projects, but the South Mountain Freeway will be completed as a single project by one contracting team.

“While ADOT has successfully built

and managed hundreds of miles of freeways in the Phoenix metropolitan area, following a public-private partnership path for the first time was an appropriate tool for the South Mountain Freeway,” said ADOT Director John Halikowski. “ADOT will be able to complete this much-needed project sooner as a result, while increasing the likelihood of saving taxpayer dollars.”

ADOT is expected to finalize the contract with Connect 202 Partners in mid-February. Construction is expected to take up to four years to complete.

The South Mountain Freeway will be built with four lanes in each direction—three general-use lanes and one High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane. The freeway will include modern features such as rubberized asphalt and aesthetics designed in partnership with the community.

For more information, visit: azdot.gov/SouthMountainFreeway



John Halikowski,
ADOT Director

ProMéxico Opens Trade Office in Phoenix

With high hopes for increasing cross-border commerce and improving relations with Arizona, ProMéxico has opened a new trade office in Phoenix.

ProMéxico is the federal government agency responsible for coordinating strategies aimed at strengthening Mexico's participation in the international economy.

The office will be responsible for directly attracting foreign investment opportunities for Mexico. It also will promote Mexican products and services to the southwestern United States.

"With the objective of expanding our presence and supporting investment and commercial activities in Arizona, it is a great pleasure to announce the opening of the new ProMéxico office in Phoenix," said Director General of ProMéxico, Francisco González Díaz.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, González Díaz called for the strengthening of ties between Mexican and Arizonan businesses, academic institutions, and government entities in order

to promote growth and prosperity on both sides of the border. The office is temporarily housed in the Mexican Consulate located on McDowell Road and Third Street in Phoenix.

"This is a big step forward for our economy, and also symbolically for our relationship with our largest trading partner and neighbor," said Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, vice chair of MAG. "The Mexican government is now investing directly in our state's economy. That is a turning point for our relationship which, frankly, suffered amidst our state's past political divisiveness. From 2007 to 2012, Arizona was the only state to see its exports fall, and so far this year, Phoenix has the biggest increase in export value of any U.S. city."

MAG Economic Development Committee Chair Michael LeVault also finds the opening of the office a positive sign.

"The Phoenix office is ProMéxico's 12th U.S. office and one of 31 other foreign offices around the world," said Chair LeVault, who is mayor of Youngtown. "It shows



A ribbon-cutting ceremony is held for the new ProMéxico office in Phoenix.

Mexico is recognizing Arizona as an important global partner. More importantly, it demonstrates an increasing trust in our region. That trust has been developing over the last several years as a result of the efforts of MAG, the state, and the economic development community."

Eduardo González Díaz de León, deputy trade and investment commissioner for ProMéxico in Phoenix, said there are many opportunities for collaboration. He emphasized the potential for bilateral investment opportunities, especially in the aerospace, electronic components manufacturing, information technology, energy and mining sectors.

"It is time to seize the moment and take advantage of the mutual opportunities," said Commissioner González Díaz de León.

It was announced during the ceremony that an agreement will be signed in the near future between the CETYS University (Centro de Enseñanzas Técnicas y Superiores de Baja California) and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. The agreement would create a student exchange program and a binational training program. The programs would focus on technical studies and help fulfill the workforce demand of the binational aerospace sector. 

MAG Moment



Keiichi Koshiyama is the senior economist with the Institute for International Economic Studies in Tokyo, Japan. He visited with MAG and the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) in October to discuss increasing trade. MAG provided an analysis of Japanese-owned firms in the region. The groups also discussed MPEXA, the new export initiative by GPEC and the Brookings Institution. The visit was part of an ongoing effort to drive foreign trade by analyzing internationally-owned firms in the region.



Joint Meeting Focuses on Economy, Environment, Infrastructure

After learning of the transportation successes in Utah, a number of transportation planning agencies in Arizona have agreed to form a stakeholder group to develop a unified transportation plan.



The presentation by Utah leaders came during a meeting of the Joint Planning Advisory Council (JPAC) in January. The JPAC consists of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), Central Arizona Governments (CAG), Pima Association of Governments (PAG) and the Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (SCMPO). The purpose of the council is to work together on mutual issues involving the Arizona Sun Corridor.

The highlight of the January meeting was a presentation by Utah leaders on the development of the Utah Unified Transportation Plan, similar to the process the JPAC now hopes to replicate. The Utah leaders reported that they relied on a survey of residents to determine the values of the community in developing their plan. For example, the Utah values survey found people wanted to spend more time with family. Policymakers were able to demonstrate how the unified plan would result in 3.6 fewer days spent driving per household per year, resulting in more time to spend with loved ones. By linking to core values, planners could better demonstrate the plan's importance and get public buy-in.

MAG Chair W.J. "Jim" Lane, mayor of Scottsdale, noted that a similar survey was conducted in the greater Phoenix area during visioning efforts for Superstition Vistas, a proposed community on state trust land on the eastern edge of Phoenix.



**Mayor
W.J. "Jim" Lane,
City of Scottsdale**

"It found that three core values shape the Greater Phoenix area: safety and security, friendly and family-oriented neighborhoods, and opportunities for healthy lifestyles," said Mayor Lane. "These values feed directly into our belief that there are inseparable linkages among the economy, infrastructure and the environment," he said.

He noted that respondents ranked economic growth and development and protecting the environment as among the most important factors. Infrastructure planning was not rated highly. This led to bringing the economy, the environment and transportation together for discussion at the JPAC in developing a unified plan.

Lane pointed out that with so many transportation voices at the table, it is important that the metropolitan planning agencies at the center of transportation planning work together with the state to create the unified plan for the JPAC and for ADOT to blend this plan into the important corridors that reach to rural Arizona.

"We need to work on a unified transportation plan as one cohesive unit, from the ground up," said Mayor Lane.

Such a plan could lead to an exploration of how to fund transportation improvements. In Utah, voters passed a local option sales tax to pay for the improvements in their plan. While such a tax may not be the solution in Arizona, Carlos Braceras, executive director of the Utah Department of Transportation, refuted the idea that a red state like Arizona is not willing to fund transportation.

"The truth is, good roads cost less. That's a key conservative principle," he said. "And Utah is about as conservative a state as you can get."

Arizona Republican Senator Bob Worsley agreed it is time to consider new funding sources. "We have to think about new sources of revenue for transportation funding and take new approaches, such as they've done in Nevada, where counties can raise taxes for transportation," said Senator Worsley, a member of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Understanding the importance of the Sonoran Desert climate in Arizona was another topic discussed at the meeting. In a presentation called "Lose the 'Or,'" Sonoran Institute Program Director Ian Dowdy said it is time to stop thinking that one has to choose between "environment OR economy." They are not mutually exclusive.

"Arizona's environment has been one of the greatest drivers of its economic growth to date," noted Dowdy. "Our success rests in a careful balance of sustainable economic growth AND preservation of our heritage." Dowdy noted that climate empowers important sectors of our economy, including housing, renewable energy, military training, outdoor recreation and tourism.

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JPAC Meeting

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Mike Hammond, a new member of the State Transportation Board and president and CEO of Cushman and Wakefield, said the state's Key Commerce Corridors describe investments needed to keep commerce moving. However, as identified by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), those investments would require \$20 billion over 20 years. He proposed investing in trade and infrastructure connections with Mexico and improving north/south routes. He noted that the FAST Act, the federal surface transportation act that became law in December, adds the Sonoran Corridor to the list of High Priority Corridors of the National Highway System.

"State Route 410 would connect I-10 and I-19 south of the Tucson International Airport," said Hammond. "In addition to the interstate commerce function, it would also enhance development of the aerospace and defense cluster anchored by Raytheon and the airport."

One solution put forth by ADOT to improve transportation funding is to find a different way to fund the Department of Public Safety rather than using the Highway User Revenue Fund. One possibility would be to increase the vehicle registration fee, which has stood at \$8 for many years. Finding a solution could result in an additional \$500 million in ADOT's Five-Year Highway Construction Program.

In summarizing the day's discussions, Maricopa Mayor Christian Price noted that such user fee increases are not popular with the legislature or the public. Reducing HURF sweeps is a big job that needs to be taken slowly.

"We need to eat the elephant one bite at a time," said Mayor Price, in summing up the day. 🏔️

Volunteers Come Together to Count Homeless

They deployed at dawn. Their mission: to count and survey people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County.

Hundreds of volunteers swept across the region in late January as part of a "point in time" homeless street count. The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Continuum of Care coordinates the count each year. Volunteer teams include city, county, and state representatives; community and faith-based organizations; businesses; and residents. The volunteers canvass areas that are likely to have homeless individuals living unsheltered on the streets.

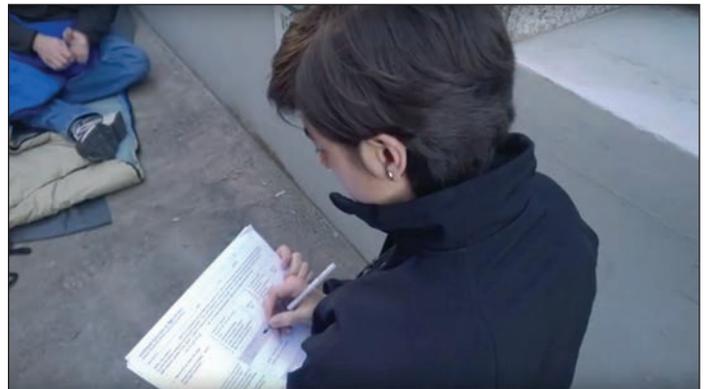
"The homeless street count is a snapshot of the number of people sleeping on the streets in Maricopa County, and is important to the region's joint work toward ending homelessness," said MAG Regional Council Chair W. J. "Jim" Lane, mayor of Scottsdale.

The count is significant to the region for many reasons, said Chandler Vice Mayor Kevin Hartke, who co-chairs the Continuum of Care Board. The Board is tasked with addressing homelessness in the region. "Data from the street and shelter count will help us to understand those experiencing homelessness, identify trends, and tailor resources to aid those most in need," he said.

Last year, the street count identified 1,289 homeless men, women and children on the streets. In addition to those living on the street, the 2015 point-in-time count also found 4,342 people living in emergency shelters or transi-

tional housing. While the shelter count decreased by 11 percent over 2014, the street count increased by 22 percent. Local experts say the shift is due to a change in how individuals sleeping in a shelter parking lot were categorized. In 2014, that overflow population was counted as sheltered. In 2015, a planning group felt it was more accurate to count them as unsheltered. Overall, the number of persons experiencing homelessness has decreased in the last three years.

Board Co-chair Darlene Newsom is CEO of UMOM, the largest shelter for homeless families in Phoenix. She noted the importance of the count in securing



federal funding. The funding is used to support critical homeless assistance programs. Since 1999, the region has been awarded \$321 million to provide housing and services for people who are homeless.

"The street count, combined with what we know about individuals and families in shelter, helps us decide where homeless services funding can have the most impact," Newsom said.

All street count volunteers go through technical and personal safety training. They are sent out in groups of two or three to count and interview unsheltered homeless people in various parts of Maricopa County. All volunteers must be 18 or older. 🏔️

Locating DPS Troopers at Traffic Center Pays Off (continued from page 1)

provide an early validation of our decision to invest in this program. We will continue to evaluate the pilot program for the next two years to ensure accountability.”

Youngtown Mayor Michael LeVault, MAG Economic Development Committee chair and past MAG chair, noted that the benefits extend to traffic beyond the freeway system. “The longer traffic is delayed on the freeway, the more local backups we have as vehicles divert onto city streets,” said Mayor LeVault. “Improving clearance times has a positive impact for all drivers in the region. These findings are very encouraging.”

FHWA Division Administrator Karla Petty says the findings will be

shared with other transportation agencies. “When we launched this program, we noted that locating public safety officers in traffic centers has been identified as a best practice across the country. These initial numbers appear to validate this practice as a means to increase efficiency and enhance safety, and we will continue to share these results as the pilot program continues,” she said.

The analysis did find that the region experienced more crashes than the year before. In the nine-month period from January to September in 2014, there were 11,243 crashes. During the same period in 2015, the region saw 13,862 crashes—a 23 percent increase. The increase in crashes led



MAG Economic Development Committee Chair Michael LeVault says clearing freeways more quickly has eliminated \$165 million in lost productivity in the region.

to longer response times for DPS to get to a crash scene, by as much as 10 more minutes. However, once on scene, DPS has been able to clear the road faster. 

Northwest Light Rail Extension in Phoenix to Open March 19, 2016

On Saturday, March 19, 2016, Valley Metro Rail will open its second light rail extension on 19th Avenue in Phoenix, giving more riders regional access to destinations across the Valley. The announcement of the earlier opening date came during a milestone event in December. The event celebrated the final phase of the new extension with vehicle testing and safety awareness.

“This is a significant day for Phoenix,” said Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton. “The opening of the Northwest light rail extension will ease travel to school, work and entertainment. With the additional three-miles of track, riders have access to a 26-mile system, making connections from Dunlap Avenue, to downtown Phoenix, Tempe and into the heart of Mesa.”



Stanton noted that testing is a critical step in completing the project and will continue up to opening day. Pedestrians and drivers should use vigilance and obey all the traffic rules when near light rail. The new 3.2 mile extension adds to the existing 23 miles of light rail connectivity.

Light rail has exceeded expectations by generating \$8.2 billion in economic development and attracting riders at record levels. The Northwest light rail extension will connect six schools, places of worship, senior living facilities and approximately 300 businesses. 



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A Quarterly Newsletter Focusing on Regional Excellence

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Spring 2016 Calendar

February

- 2nd 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 3rd 9:00 a.m. Regional Community Network Working Group (Ironwood)
- 3rd 9:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 3rd 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee (Ironwood)
- 4th 2:00 p.m. Regional Domestic Violence Council (Ironwood)
- 9th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee (Ironwood)
- 10th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 11th 1:30 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 15th President's Day (Office Closed)
- 16th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 16th 1:00 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee (Saguaro)
- 16th 3:00 p.m. Transit Committee (Ironwood)
- 17th 12:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 17th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee (Ironwood)
- 22nd 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Board (Ironwood)
- 23rd 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee (Chaparral)
- 24th 11:30 a.m. Regional Council (Saguaro)
- 25th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee (Saguaro)
- 25th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (Saguaro)

All meetings, unless indicated otherwise, will be held in the conference rooms located in the MAG office on the 2nd floor of the building, 302 N. 1st Ave., Phoenix.

The dates, times and locations of all meetings may change. Other committees not listed here may meet during these months. For confirmation, call (602) 254-6300, or visit the website: www.azmag.gov/Events

March

- 1st 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 2nd 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee (Ironwood)
- 4th 9:00 a.m. Regional Community Network Working Group (Ironwood)
- 4th 9:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 8th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee (Ironwood)
- 9th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 10th 1:30 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 14th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 15th 1:00 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee (Saguaro)
- 15th 3:00 p.m. Transit Committee (Ironwood)
- 16th 12:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 16th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee (Ironwood)
- 22nd 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee (Ironwood)
- 22nd 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee (Chaparral)
- 23rd 11:30 a.m. Regional Council (Saguaro)
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee (Saguaro)
- 24th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (Saguaro)
- 28th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Board (Ironwood)
- 30th 10:00 a.m. Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Committee (Chaparral)

Parking is available under the building. Please ask for parking validation at the meeting. A transit ticket will be provided for anyone who purchased a transit ticket to attend a meeting. Bike racks are available at the entrance to the parking garage.

April

- 5th 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 6th 9:00 a.m. Regional Community Network Working Group (Ironwood)
- 6th 9:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 6th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee (Ironwood)
- 7th 2:00 p.m. Regional Domestic Violence Council (Ironwood)
- 12th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee (Ironwood)
- 13th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 14th 1:30 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 18th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 19th 1:00 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee (Saguaro)
- 19th 3:00 p.m. Transit Committee (Ironwood)
- 20th 12:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 20th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee (Ironwood)
- 21st 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (Saguaro)
- 25th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Board (Ironwood)
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee (Chaparral)
- 27th 10:00 a.m. Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Committee (Chaparral)
- 27th 10:00 a.m. Human Services and Community Initiatives Committee (Cottonwood)
- 27th 11:30 a.m. Regional Council (Saguaro)
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee (Saguaro)

The newsletter is available at www.azmag.gov. Click on the MAG Publications link and then MAGAZine Newsletter link.