

MINUTES OF THE  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
MAG REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

September 21, 2020

This meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom.

The link to a video recording of the meeting [can be found here](#).

MEMBERS ATTENDING

#Mayor Jerry Weiers, Glendale, Chair #Mayor John Giles, Mesa: Vice Chair #Mayor Kenneth Weise: Treasurer #Mayor Kate Gallego, Phoenix	#Mayor Anna Tovar, Tolleson #Mayor Les Peterson, Carefree #Mayor Kevin Hartke, Chandler
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\* Not Present

# Participated virtually

1. Call to Order

Chair Jerry Weiers called the virtual meeting of the Executive Committee to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. Call to the Audience

Members of the public were asked to submit written comments related to this meeting through the MAG website. Comments may be sent at any time leading up to the meeting, but must be received at least one hour prior to the posted start time for the meeting.

This is the opportunity for the public to comment on items that fall under MAG's jurisdiction that are not on the agenda, or that are on the agenda for discussion and not for action.

No public comment was received.

3. Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Weiers stated that items 3A through 3C were on the consent agenda. He provided the committee with an update on action taken at the September 16, 2020,

Management Committee meeting, indicating items 3B and 3C were unanimously recommended for approval.

Mayor Gallego moved approval of the consent agenda. Mayor Tovar seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously with Mayor Gallego, Mayor Giles, Mayor Hartke, Mayor Peterson, Mayor Tovar, Mayor Weiers, and Mayor Weise voting in favor of the motion.

\*3A. Approval of June 22, 2020, Meeting Minutes

The MAG Executive Committee, by consent, approved of the June 22, 2020, meeting minutes.

\*3B. Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget for the Fiscal Year 2021 MAG Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Design Assistance Program

The MAG Executive Committee, by consent, approved an amendment to the FY 2020-2021 MAG Unified Planning Work Program to include the prioritized list of projects, funding \$500,000 for Design Assistance projects, and allowing unfunded projects on the prioritized list to be eligible if additional funding becomes available.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget, approved by the MAG Regional Council in May 2019, includes \$500,000 for the MAG Design Assistance program. The Design Assistance Program allows MAG member agencies to apply for funding for the preliminary design portion of a bicycle or pedestrian project with no matching funds required.

\*3C. Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021 Unified Planning Work Program and Budget to Include a MAG Transportation Safety Associate Contract With Michael J. Kuzel for an Amount Not to Exceed \$80,000

The MAG Executive Committee, by consent, approved an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021 Unified Planning Work Program and Budget to include a MAG Transportation Safety Associate Contract with Michael J. Kuzel for an amount not to exceed \$80,000.

The focus of this request is to enhance capabilities of the MAG Transportation Safety Program by incorporating professional services of an individual with experience in analyzing human behaviors as it relates to the built roadway and

other systems. The MAG Transportation Safety Associate will provide expertise to assist MAG in three key areas of safety planning, safety planning studies, administration of developed safety education programs, development and implementation of the MAG Strategic Transportation Safety Plan.

4. Contract Extension for Federal Government Relations Assistance

MAG Policy and Government Relations Director Nathan Pryor provided the committee with a recap of the Capitol Strategies' work on the Border Crossing Card initiative, now known as the Southwest Tourism Expansion Act. The Act was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in December. There is a bipartisan effort by Arizona congressional members in the House and the Senate, which has resulted in the Act being included in the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill in the House. The Act would allow visitors from Mexico with a Border Crossing Card who are screened and vetted to travel statewide. Currently these visitors are able to travel to Tucson or the Yuma area. A study done by the University of Arizona showed the Act would provide the region a net benefit of \$181 million in the first year. The Bill is currently on hold, but MAG and members of the Arizona delegation continue to support this effort.

Capitol Strategies partner Mr. Jim Kolbe thanked Mr. Pryor for providing background information on the progress of the Southwest Tourism Expansion Act. Mr. Kolbe indicated the Act's inclusion in the Homeland Security bill is a significant step forward. The Capitol Strategies team will continue to work with the Senate to ensure the provision stays in the bill before it is passed. He thanked members of the Arizona delegation who worked hard to get the provision included in the bill.

Capitol Strategies partner Mr. Steve Bloch discussed next steps for the Act. There was a tentative agreement reached late last week prior to the passing of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg that Congress would pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) until December 11 at which time they would take up several appropriations bills, one of which is the Homeland Security bill containing the Southwest Tourism Expansion Act provision. There is some uncertainty but Mr. Bloch believes Congress will not allow the government to shut down because neither side views a shutdown as being politically advantageous. It remains to be seen whether the CR passes, is extended to next year, or just until December. Even if the CR is extended into next year, the new Congress should take up the bill where it left off.

Chair Weiers stated when he first became a part of MAG as a new mayor, the agency was already working on this effort. He also recalled discussion about this issue when he was legislator prior to becoming a mayor. Chair Weiers commented on the pace of progress in Congress. He wondered if there are other avenues MAG should be looking at to get the Southwest Tourism Expansion Act passed. Chair Weiers indicated he supports extending the Capitol Strategies contract for an additional six months and noted MAG might want to think about looking at a wider lobbying effort for this as well as other issues, including transportation. He suggested MAG put out a request for proposals (RFP) for lobbying services to make sure Arizona is getting all of the federal funding available to it.

Mr. Anderson stated that in the past, MAG has looked into hiring a full-time legislative lobbyist for the federal agenda and said he is open to having that discussion again. He indicated that currently MAG relies on the lobbying efforts of member agencies and national associations to track transportation policy activity. Mr. Anderson agreed that a bigger legislative presence would be helpful and stated the Executive Committee could hold a discussion on lobbying efforts in the future to determine if it should be pursued.

Mr. Kolbe commented that the region is further along than it has ever been in the effort to allow Border Crossing Card holders to travel statewide and anticipates success over the next few months. He emphasized his agreement with Chair Weiers about the speed in which Congress gets things done.

Mayor Peterson added that MAG's lobbying efforts should be looked at as a long-term commitment because the benefits may not come immediately. He noted his support for prior comments.

Mayor Gallego stated that if MAG is looking at a greater federal presence, it would be beneficial to understand how other peer organizations and counties have pursued this and how they coordinate their efforts. She mentioned it is important to present a unified regional message.

Mayor Hartke moved approval of an extension of the Capitol Strategies contract for federal government relations assistance for \$4,600 a month for up to six additional months through March 2021. Mayor Weise seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Mayor Gallego, Mayor Giles, Mayor Hartke, Mayor Peterson, Mayor Tovar, Mayor Weise and Mayor Weiers voted in favor of the motion.

5. Draft MAG Policy Principles

MAG Policy and Government Relations Director Mr. Nathan Pryor indicated the agency first developed the MAG Policy Principles several years ago to summarize MAG's legislative positions as well as the agency's roles and responsibilities. The MAG Policy Principles are updated annually or as needed. The approved set of policy principles range from roles and responsibilities to legislative issues, some being broad and others more specific. He commented these policy principles are helpful in conversations with legislative members and their staff, local officials and members of Congress.

Mr. Pryor stated if an issue arises over the course of the year, having an approved set of policy principles allows MAG to react in a timely manner. He called the committee's attention to two changes in this year's iteration of the policy principles document. The first is regarding enabling legislation for an extension of the half-cent sales tax for transportation. The second is under the administrative part of the document and is a statement describing prohibitions on discrimination, a principal born out of the Civil Rights Act.

Mr. Pryor noted that since distributing the draft document earlier this month for review by member agencies, staff has received feedback from Maricopa County government relations staff and is working with them to reword the statement regarding the enabling legislation policy principle. As currently written, there was concern that to someone unfamiliar with the development of the regional transportation plan, it may look like MAG is pushing for enabling legislation in the 2021 legislative session. Staff is working with County staff to revise the statement to clarify that work on enabling legislation is ongoing.

Mr. Pryor indicated staff will bring the revised policy principles back through the committee approval process in October for additional review, recommended approval and ultimately approval by Regional Council. The policy principles have been included in consent agenda packets for Management Committee, Transportation Policy Committee, and the Regional Council and will be reviewed by the Economic Development Committee. He encouraged membership to contact himself, Mr. Anderson, or MAG Deputy Executive Director Amy St. Peter with any feedback.

Mayor Weiers indicated he asked Glendale's intergovernmental representative to work with MAG staff on a concern regarding the need to have electric and alternative fuel vehicles pay their fair share for vehicle registration. He stated as these cars become more common and standard gasoline vehicles become more

fuel efficient, the region is losing out on money that should be going into funding transportation.

6. COVID-19 Update

Mr. Anderson provided an update on the agency's efforts during the pandemic, with a focus on how MAG plans to transition back into the office environment when the appropriate health metrics are met. He stated MAG is in a unique situation because people come from all over the region to attend meetings and there are different metrics within each member agency. Staff also is monitoring how the opening of universities and schools will affect Arizona's health metrics. Mr. Anderson noted MAG plans to have virtual meetings for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Anderson indicated MAG has surveyed staff and there is still a high level of anxiety about returning to work in person. He noted parents of school aged children have different situations with some kids attending school virtually and others back in the classroom. MAG feels it is appropriate to maintain the status quo at this time. Mr. Anderson turned the presentation over to Ms. St. Peter to discuss the agency's plan to move back into the office in phases as the health metrics warrant.

Ms. St. Peter indicated MAG's priority is to keep staff and stakeholders safe while continuing to provide high quality work and responding in a timely manner. With this goal in mind, MAG developed a transition plan to maintain a productive and safe environment. The plan was guided and informed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). She reviewed some of the details and phases of the plan with the committee. Ms. St. Peter emphasized that a vast majority of MAG's work can be done remotely with employees working safely from home.

Ms. St. Peter welcomed guidance from members of the Executive Committee regarding MAG's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were no questions or comments.

7. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair Weiers asked if there were any requests for future agenda items.

There were none.

8. Comments from the Committee

Chair Weiers asked if there were any comments from the committee.

Mayor Hartke stated he is happy to be a part of the committee. Chair Weiers welcomed him to the committee.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Weiers adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary