

**MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**

August 26, 2020

This meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom.
The link to a video recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

MEMBERS ATTENDING

<p>#Glendale: Mayor Jerry Weiers, Chair #Mesa: Mayor John Giles, Vice Chair #Apache Junction: Councilmember Robin Barker #Avondale: Mayor Kenneth Weise #Buckeye: Mayor Jackie Meck *Carefree: Mayor Les Peterson #Cave Creek: Vice Mayor David L. Smith #Chandler: Mayor Kevin Hartke #El Mirage: Mayor Alexis Hermosillo *Florence: Mayor Tara Walter #Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: President Bernadine Burnette #Fountain Hills: Mayor Ginny Dickey *Gila Bend: Mayor Tommy Lee Sikes *Gila River Indian Community: Governor Stephen Roe Lewis #Gilbert: Mayor Scott Anderson #Goodyear: Mayor Georgia Lord #Guadalupe: Mayor Valerie Molina</p>	<p>#Litchfield Park: Mayor Thomas Schoaf #City of Maricopa: Mayor Christian Price *Maricopa County: Supervisor Clint Hickman *Paradise Valley: Mayor Jerry Bien-Willner #Peoria: Mayor Cathy Carlat #Phoenix: Mayor Kate Gallego *Pinal County: Supervisor Todd House #Queen Creek: Mayor Gail Barney *Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community: President Martin Harvier *Scottsdale: Mayor W.J. "Jim" Lane #Surprise: Mayor Skip Hall #Tempe: Mayor Corey Woods *Tolleson: Mayor Anna Tovar *Wickenburg: Mayor Rui Pereira #Youngtown: Mayor Michael LeVault #State Transportation Board: Ms. Jenn Daniels *State Transportation Board: Mr. Sam Elters</p>
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* Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

Attended by web conference/teleconference.

1. Call to Order

A quorum of the MAG Regional Council was present via Zoom. Chair Jerry Weiers, Glendale, called the meeting of the MAG Regional Council to order at 11:32 a.m.

2. Executive Director's Report

Chair Weiers introduced MAG Deputy Executive Director Amy St. Peter to provide a report on items on general interest in the MAG region.

Ms. St. Peter gave a report on behalf of MAG Executive Director Eric Anderson who was unable to attend the meeting. She reported MAG is pivoting its response to the Census count based on the U.S. Census Bureau's plans to end the 2020 Census count on September 30, 2020, one month earlier than previously thought. The regional outreach campaign, iCount2020, has readjusted its media plan to reflect the new deadline, with additional emphasis on digital outreach and continued focus on undercounted populations and low response areas. She noted that MAG would be working with member agency representatives to identify accomplishments as well as lessons learned from this year's campaign and would provide a report to the Council when that becomes available. Ms. St. Peter provided a snapshot of the region's response to the Census by member agency and added that a final report will be provided after the count concludes. She encouraged membership to contact MAG if they need additional support to ensure a complete count before the Census ends.

Ms. St. Peter reported that for the first time, MAG's annual Crossing Guard Training occurred virtually. The training is part of MAG's Safe Routes to School program. When students are able to return to school in person, MAG wants to make sure they do so safely. More than 200 crossing guards and school officials learned about how to protect schoolchildren, including how and when to place signs, how to use their stop paddles correctly, laws regarding school crossings, the differences between types of crosswalks and signalized intersections, and much more. Participants also learned the importance of protecting themselves such as how to be visible and how to protect themselves from the sun and dehydration. She noted a recorded version of the training in both English and Spanish would be available soon at <http://srts.azmag.gov>.

Ms. St. Peter reported that older adults face significant challenges in accessing transportation services when they can no longer drive. Historically, some foundations have been hesitant to get into this work for a variety of reasons. She noted that working with Grantmakers in Aging, MAG has developed a toolkit to encourage foundations to support transportation programs and to offer tips tools and to support them in this work. The

toolkit is available on the Age Friendly website, <http://www.agefriendlyaz.org/>, and following today's meeting, MAG plans to send out a press release about the toolkit. The toolkit will be the focus of a national webinar on November 10, 2020. She thanked The Weinberg Foundation and the Federal Highway Administration for providing support on this effort as well as a number of other organizations.

Ms. St. Peter spent a moment honoring the life of businessman Mike McQuaid who was a vital community leader and philanthropist in Arizona. Mr. McQuaid was a driving force in the creation of the Human Services Campus, a national model that has moved thousands of people from the streets into homes of their own and was an inaugural recipient of the Piper Trust's Encore Career Prize in 2013. He died on July 25, 2020, due to COVID-19 complications. Mr. McQuaid was praised by Governor Ducey as "one of our brightest lights and champions for good."

3. Approval of Consent Agenda

Chair Weiers noted that agenda items *3A through *3H were on the Consent Agenda.

Chair Weiers asked if members had questions or requests for a presentation on any of the Consent Agenda items. None were noted.

Mayor Hartke made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mayor Carlat seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously with Mayor Anderson, Councilmember Barker, Mayor Barney, Mayor Carlat, Ms. Daniels, Mayor Dickey, Mayor Gallego, Mayor Giles, Mayor Hall, Mayor Hartke, Mayor Hermosillo, Mayor LeVault, Mayor Lord, Mayor Meck, Mayor Molina, Mayor Price, Mayor Schoaf, Vice Mayor Smith, Mayor Weiers, and Mayor Weise voting in favor of the motion.

3A. Approval of the June 24, 2020, Meeting Minutes

The Regional Council, by consent, approved of the June 24, 2020, meeting minutes.

3B. Conformity Consultation

The Maricopa Association of Governments is conducting consultation on a conformity assessment for an amendment and administrative modification to the FY 2020-2024 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and 2040 Regional Transportation Plan Update. The amendment and administrative modification involve changes to several projects, including general highway projects, Arterial Life Cycle Program projects, and Freeway Life

Cycle Program 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.

This item was on the agenda for consultation.

3C. Transportation Improvement Program Project Changes

The MAG Regional Council, by consent, approved of amendments and administrative modifications as appropriate to the Fiscal Year 2020-2024 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, and 2040 MAG Regional Transportation Plan Update, as appropriate.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2024 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the 2040 MAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update were approved by the Regional Council on February 26, 2020, and have since been amended three times.

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

3D. Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget to add \$75,000 to the SR-30/Tres Rios, SR-202L South Mountain to I-17/Black Canyon Scoping Study and Planning and Environmental Linkages Statement

The MAG Regional Council, by consent, approved of the amendment to the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget to add funding in the amount of \$75,000 to the SR-30/Tres Rios, SR-202L South Mountain to I-17/Black Canyon Scoping Study and Planning and Environmental Linkages Statement.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget, approved by MAG Regional Council in May 2019, includes the SR-30/Tres Rios, SR-202L South Mountain to I-17/Black Canyon Scoping Study and Planning and Environmental Linkages Statement (PEL). As the scoping study has progressed, additional engineering and analysis needs have been identified to refine corridor options and inform development of the study's final recommendations anticipated in December 2021. Accordingly, this agenda item represents a request to add \$75,000 to the SR-30/Tres Rios, SR-202L South Mountain to I-17/Black Canyon Scoping Study and PEL. The additional money will come from the Freeway Life Cycle Program region-wide preliminary engineering funding allocation.

3E. Arterial Life Cycle Program Status Report, January – June 2020

The Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP) is the financial management tool for the arterial street component of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The ALCP Policies and Procedures, which were approved by the MAG Regional Council on June 24, 2015, guide management of the program. The ALCP Policy and Procedures require that a status report be provided to MAG committee members to give an update on all project requirements and financial information. This agenda item reflects the second semi-annual update for FY 2020.

This item was on the agenda for information.

3F. Appointment of the MAG Economic Development Committee Member Agency Position

The MAG Regional Council, by consent, approved the appointment of Mark Sanders as the ADOT representative on the MAG Economic Development Committee.

The MAG Regional Council approved increasing the composition of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to include 21 MAG member agency positions that have one-year terms with possible reappointment by recommendation of the Executive Committee and approval of the MAG Regional Council. The member agency positions include a representative from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT).

On July 28, 2020, a letter was received from Director John Halikowski recommending Mr. Mark Sanders serve as the ADOT representative on the EDC. The Regional Council is requested to approve Mark Sanders as the ADOT EDC member.

3G. Community Stipends for the Rural Transportation Incubator

The MAG Regional Council, by consent, approved of the selection of Assist to Independence, Changepoint Integrated Health, Foundation for Senior Living, Interfaith Community Services, Neighbors Who Care, New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center, TAP AZ Coalition for Military Families, Volunteer Interfaith Caregivers Program, and the City of Winslow, for a total not to exceed \$190,000.

On May 13, 2019, the MAG Regional Council Executive Committee approved an amendment to the FY 2019 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget to accept grant funding from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. This funding was awarded to Regional Community Partners and MAG. The project budget includes \$130,000 to support transportation services for older adults with low incomes in rural

communities statewide. This project also includes \$60,000 in grant funding from the Federal Highway Administration, approved by the MAG Regional Council Executive Committee on September 27, 2018. This funding provides communities with stipends to support the implementation of technology solutions to make transportation services for older adults with low incomes more effective.

On May 27, 2020, MAG released a Request for Proposals to identify communities to receive the transportation and technology stipends. By June 19, 2020, a total of nine proposals were received by the deadline of noon. All proposals met threshold requirements. On June 29, 2020, an evaluation team met to review and score the proposals. Based on the scoring and evaluation criteria listed in the Request for Proposals, the team is recommending the selection of Assist to Independence, Changepoint Integrated Health, Foundation for Senior Living, Interfaith Community Services, Neighbors Who Care, New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center, TAP AZ Coalition for Military Families, Volunteer Interfaith Caregivers Program, and the City of Winslow, for a total not to exceed \$190,000.

3H. Appointment of Transportation Policy Committee Members

The MAG Regional Council, by consent, approved of the appointment of representatives from Tempe, Gilbert, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and the State Transportation Board to serve on the Transportation Policy Committee.

The composition of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), established by the Regional Council on April 24, 2002, includes elected officials from the seven largest cities/towns, a Native American Indian community member, as well as a State Transportation Board member. MAG received letters of interest from Tempe and Gilbert – two of the seven largest cities/towns, a letter from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community for the Native American Indian Community seat, and a letter from the State Transportation Board requesting that the officials be appointed to the TPC.

4. 2020 Point in Time (PIT) Homeless Count Report

MAG Human Services Planner Sarah Kent presented information about the 2020 Point in Time (PIT) Homeless Count. Conducted on a single day, on January 28, 2020, the PIT Count is an annual street and shelter count that determines the number of people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County during a given point in time. The Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care worked with 24 municipalities in the Maricopa County region for the PIT count and will use the data collected as well as the regional Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to better understand the population experiencing

homelessness in the region, and to provide solutions that will make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Ms. Kent indicated the PIT Count is an important source of data on homelessness, and is reported to Congress as part of the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR). There is a steady increase in homelessness in Maricopa County, with a high eviction rate and lack of affordable housing. The PIT Count found an 11 percent increase in homelessness over last year. Ms. Kent displayed graphics showing the homelessness growth rate from 2019 to 2020.

Ms. Kent stated the PIT Count found that 49 percent of those surveyed were in shelter programs and 51 percent were unsheltered on the street or another place not meant for human habitation. More troubling, for the first time, the number of people on the street (3,767) surpassed the number of people in shelters (3,652). The unsheltered group grew by 18 percent compared to 2019. She provided additional statistics including the number of males, females and transgender or non-conforming homeless persons as well as their ages and ethnic identity. Ms. Kent noted the Maricopa Continuum of Care (CoC) is in the process of working with Racial Equity consultants to address ethnic disparities. The PIT Count also identified families, youth between the ages of 18-24, veterans, chronically homeless, and other subpopulations.

Ms. Kent reported the overall unsheltered count for the Maricopa County region has been increasing each year. The number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in each sub-region has also been increasing annually, with the majority of the unsheltered population concentrated in central Phoenix. The numbers demonstrate the need for more affordable, permanent housing. She added that this year, volunteers submitted most surveys using a mobile app. She recognized MAG's Regional Analytics Division for creating a live dashboard so that teams could see the count in real time.

Ms. Kent emphasized that homelessness is solvable. She stated the region can solve the crisis by creating the space to break down barriers and stigmas while working with local communities and governments to build more affordable housing options, provide rental subsidies for those that need it, and ensure that services are available to keep people housed. Ms. Kent thanked those experiencing homelessness for their time, as well as 2020 PIT Count Municipal Coordinators, volunteers, staff, and outreach teams that put in the time and effort to make this a successful count, and the Crisis Response Network for collecting and verifying provider data for the Housing Inventory Chart and Sheltered Count.

Ms. Kent stated MAG is working closely with Maricopa County to understand the impact

COVID-19 pandemic will have on the homeless population. She added that organizers still do not know how the 2021 PIT Count will be impacted.

Chair Weiers thanked Ms. Kent for her report.

Mayor Gallego also thanked Ms. Kent for her work. She noted that Ms. Kent's presentation mentioned the challenge of rising rent costs in the region. Mayor Gallego expressed concern about the effects the COVID-19 pandemic is having and stated that even without rising rent, changing economic circumstances and job losses will lead to a dramatic increase in the region's homelessness numbers. She added the homelessness issue needs to be at the forefront and hopes there will continue to be regional discussions at MAG. Mayor Gallego stated the City of Phoenix unanimously passed a plan to create 50,000 affordable housing units as well as to support homeless veterans, youth and other vulnerable groups. She said she hopes the State also helps to find solutions to this problem.

Mayor Weise stated it is up to the other cities to help take pressure off of Phoenix. He added that homelessness numbers have gone up in Avondale and said he believes those numbers still may be too low. Mayor Weise called on West Valley leadership to take action to partner on facilities. He said he would look to Mayor Gallego for guidance and inspiration. Mayor Weise noted that West Valley mayors need to work together on this issue because the number of homeless residents continues to rise.

Mayor Dickey reminded the Council that the League of Arizona Cities and Towns will have a resolution to offer tax credits or some help with affordable housing and other incentives during its conference scheduled for next week.

Chair Weiers commented he was proud to share the City of Glendale has experienced a reduction in homelessness. He indicated this reduction was made possible through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, and highlighted a program that began two years ago in partnership with the Phoenix Rescue Mission called "Glendale Works." Chair Weiers offered to share his experiences with members of the Council and stressed the importance of partnerships and cooperation.

5. Regional Economic Update

MAG Regional Analytics Director Anubhav Bagley presented a report on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to our regional economy. Mr. Bagley discussed economic trends including unemployment; weekly visitor patterns; tax collection; real estate construction and vacancy; and the housing market.

Mr. Bagley indicated the region's unemployment rate is 10.3 percent, up 5.9 percent year over year. MAG has been working with the Arizona Department of Economic Security to track initial unemployment claims. There are approximately 260,000 people unemployed in Maricopa County, or about two and a half times the number of unemployed in February 2020. This is down from approximately 320,000 residents who were unemployed in April 2020.

Mr. Bagley reported MAG has partnered with the SafeGraph COVID -19 Data Consortium to gather anonymous data on weekly visits to about 70,000 points-of-interest and business locations in the region. This data is taken from cellphone location data from approximately 200,000 residents. The information is helping MAG to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local economy. He displayed charts with data from the week of August 10 showing the relative change of mobility, based on number of visits compared to the same time last year. Interactive charts are updated weekly and can be viewed at: <https://azmag.gov/Programs/Maps-and-Data/Weekly-Visits>. He noted current mobility in the region is at approximately 68 percent of mobility compared to the same time in 2019. If the number of COVID-19 cases in the region decline, we should see an increase in mobility.

Mr. Bagley indicated hotel accommodations are at 58 percent of what our region would normally see at this time of the year. At its lowest point at the end of March, the region had only 24 percent of the typical hotel and motel visits. Restaurant and bar activity is currently hovering at about 74 percent of normal. He commented these two sectors are the biggest for unemployment claims. Mr. Bagley also discussed weekly visit patterns from selected sectors and noted home improvement sales went up during stay at home orders. He added that information on sales did not include online transactions.

Mr. Bagley next discussed changes to Transaction Privilege Tax Collection in the MAG region. He noted the collection is 9 percent higher versus July 2019. While spending in hotels and restaurants is down, tax collection from retail spending is up 14 percent from brick and mortar stores and 63 percent from online purchases.

Mr. Bagley turned his focus to the pandemic's effects on real estate and housing. Construction permit values are down more than 18 percent for residential permits and almost 44 percent for commercial permits. He commented these numbers are concerning as they relate to the economy and employment. Mr. Bagley indicated the region is seeing a trend in rising vacancy rates in office, industrial, and retail space. He stated it will be interesting to watch how the work from home trend affects office vacancy rates.

Mr. Bagley reported information gathered from the Arizona Regional Multiple Listing

Service. Housing sales patterns are following trends from last year with a slightly higher number of sales in 2020. He noted there were a record number of sales for July. There is currently a decline in housing inventory in the region, with inventory down 27 percent from the same time last year. The median housing sales price has risen 13.5 percent since last July. Most of Maricopa County saw an increase in housing prices from between 10 and 25 percent over the last year.

Mr. Bagely discussed evictions in Maricopa County. The county typically sees about 6,000 evictions each month. An eviction moratorium began on March 24 and is set to expire on October 31. He noted it is still unknown how the end of the eviction moratorium will affect the housing market.

Mr. Bagley stated the general trend for the economy is positive and added that he is cautiously optimistic. He emphasized an economy recovery will depend on if the region continues to see a reduction in COVID cases and is able to continue to open. Mr. Bagley also shared that his division is working on developing a housing affordability analysis from the perspective of residents as well as workers and will update the Council once it is complete.

Mayor Gallego asked if there was any information on who is buying homes and where they are moving from. Mr. Bagley answered that the multiple listing service does not track that information. Data on address changes will not be available for six months.

6. Update on the Development of a New Regional Transportation Plan

MAG Transportation Planning Program Manager Audra Koester Thomas provided an update on efforts to develop a new Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that will serve as the basis for the extension of Proposition 400, including the planning work underway, technical work associated with the development of the new RTP and activities associated with the RTP Management Committee Work Group.

Ms. Thomas' presentation focused on an overview of the performance-based evaluation framework, the activities that will occur over the next six months, and how these activities will move the region along in the process of going from a full needs catalog to a refined and fiscally constrained investment project and program portfolio. She stated she would be sharing some of the feedback already received by the Management Committee RTP work group, Management Committee and Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). She began by revisiting the revised vision and goals. Draft vision and goals were presented to the Council in May and June this year and were then refined based on committee feedback. The vision states that the purpose of the Regional Transportation Plan is to

establish a sustainable, resilient, multimodal transportation investment program that connects people with opportunities to prosper and thrive. The region will accomplish this by achieving six goals that include safety; mobility; prosperity; responsiveness; livability; and preservation. With the recent launch of the MOMENTUM website, MAG has asked the public for feedback about how they would like for these goals to be achieved.

Ms. Thomas reviewed the performance-based evaluation process and the steps the region will take to get from the full needs catalog to the project and program portfolio. The full needs catalog comprises more than 1,300 different project and program ideas submitted by member agencies, regionally identified needs, studied projects over the last decade, as well as projects that were deferred out of Proposition 400 funded programs. The RTP project evaluation steps include regional project screening, project-level evaluation, project/program review and evaluation, and a scenario planning and tradeoff analysis, which will inform development of a fiscally-constrained project and program portfolio.

Ms. Thomas provided a summary of the performance homework assignment feedback from July's Management Committee work group, which staff used to gain feedback into some of the elements of the process. Staff focused on receiving feedback for how to evaluate larger projects and what uncertainties or policies should be tested in a tradeoff analysis. This work involved homework assignments which were included as a part of the agenda packet for today's meeting. Ms. Thomas went over key takeaways from the homework. Feedback on the goals indicated mobility, safety, and prosperity ranked higher in importance by managers, something that also was echoed in comments received at the August TPC meeting. Recognizing the each goal applies in different ways to a multimodal system, weighting criteria within modal project evaluation categories will be applied moving forward. There were no major "gaps" identified in project evaluation framework and there was general support for identified outcomes, evaluation criteria and performance measures with an emphasis to priority outcomes, criteria, and measures.

Ms. Thomas also mentioned feedback from the frameworks to evaluate freeway and highway projects, arterial framework projects, and high-capacity transit projects. Strong feedback was received for the livability goal, particularly in supporting programs and investments around active transportation and air quality. Ms. Thomas also reviewed feedback received on Step 3: project/program review and validation, Step 4: scenario planning, comments and ideas for project implementation, and noted the ongoing conversations about preservation.

Ms. Thomas discussed the recent launch of the MOMENTUM website. She encouraged Council members to share the website and social media handles with their constituents to help build an online presence, noting the pandemic will require heavy reliance on the

website and its virtual tools to connect with the public and leverage opportunities for feedback through virtual meetings, online surveys, and other tools.

Ms. Thomas reviewed key deliverables coming up in September that include a peer region analysis as well as the draft needs catalogue for which staff will be seeking feedback and direction from the Regional Council as well as other policymakers to identify what potential programs are regional priorities. At the request of the MAG Management Committee, staff has been working directly with Committee Chair Julie Arendall from the City of Goodyear to develop policy framework and documentation of future RTP and extension policy questions. Staff has distributed drafts of those documents to the Management Committee with the intent to discuss and further refine the documents at the September 9 Management Committee RTP work group. Ms. Thomas encouraged members of the Council to continue to work in partnership with their manager to ensure those drafts adequately capture their input. These documents will be distributed to members of the TPC and Regional Council following the work group session. In late September, robust conversation will begin with the work group on transit policy, including the region's approach to a future regional bus system and the role of the region and local communities in each funding transit investment. She noted that in response to questions about MAG's transit responsibilities, a memo was included in today's agenda packet that details the transit policy and planning roles in the region codified in state statute as well as a planning agreement between Valley Metro, City of Phoenix and MAG.

Mayor Hartke thanked Ms. Thomas for her work. He commented that in order to successfully pass the extension, residents from across the region will need to feel there is a direct benefit to them from this plan. Mayor Hartke added that residents will be contributing a lot of money to this plan and communities will have their residents delivering hundreds of millions of dollars over the extension timeframe. He stated he looks at this process from the point of view of what is in it for each of our communities that will compel them to vote for the extension.

Mayor Gallego shared that as the City of Phoenix developed its transportation plan it got feedback from residents of the city. She noted when the process began she thought the most compelling argument for the plan might be jobs and economic development. Mayor Gallego stated that through research, the city found that residents care about livability, which includes taking care of others as well as sustainability. She mentioned residents also care about repairing potholes and that preservation matters. Mayor Gallego emphasized from Phoenix's perspective, livability is a priority.

Mayor Woods said that he was excited to be a part of the MAG Regional Council. Chair Weiers noted that Mayor Woods had recovered from COVID-19. Mayor Woods stated

that he was fully recovered. He agreed with Mayor Gallego's comments, and stated livability is also a top priority for the City of Tempe.

7. Legislative Update

MAG Policy and Government Relations Director Nathan Pryor indicated MAG continues to maintain communication with the legislature, particularly in regard to the extension of Proposition 400, providing updates to legislative staff, including senate transportation staff and Senator David Livingston who serves as Chair of the Senate Transportation Infrastructure Committee. Mr. Pryor thanked Mayor Weiers and Mayor Giles for recent conversations with Senator Livingston and keeping him updated as to where MAG is in the development of the next regional transportation plan.

Mr. Pryor next discussed action MAG will take in response to the U.S. Census Bureau's plan to end field work and gathering of responses earlier than anticipated. As mentioned during the Executive Director's report, the Census response deadline was moved from the end of October to the end of September. He stated this is not helpful to Arizona because the U.S. national average for the follow up response rate is approximately 12.9 percent and in Arizona it is only 7.9 percent. To improve response rates, the U.S. Census Bureau has introduced follow up measures in addition to going door to door including phone calls, sending emails, setting up tables at grocery stores and pharmacies, as well as expanding paid advertisements. Mr. Pryor indicated the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and National Association of Development Organizations have jointly developed a letter of concern to be sent to congressional leadership about the U.S. Census Bureau's changes. The letter will be finalized today and sent to congressional leadership this week. He thanked Chair Weiers for signing on to the letter in his role as MAG Chair on behalf of the region.

Mr. Pryor discussed the progress of the Southwest Tourism Expansion Act, familiar to some as the Border Crossing Card initiative. The Act would allow visitors from Mexico with a Border Crossing Card who are screened and vetted to travel statewide. Currently they are able to travel to the Tucson 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 Act was introduced in Congress in December of 2019 but ultimately did not pass. There is now 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. The Bill is currently on hold but MAG and members of the Arizona delegation will continue to support this effort.

Mr. Pryor reported the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is concluding

at the end of September. With this being an election year, MAG anticipates the Act will be a part of a continuing resolution. Staff will continue to track this issue.

Mr. Pryor provided an update regarding the MAG Policy Principles document which was created several years ago to summarize MAG's legislative positions and the agency's roles and responsibilities. Staff plans to share a draft of an updated document at policy meetings in September and will bring the policy principles back through the committee process in October for anticipated approval by the Regional Council.

There were no questions or comments from membership.

8. Request for Future Agenda Items

An opportunity was provided for Regional Council members to present requests for topics or issues of interest that the Regional Council would like to have considered for discussion at a future meeting.

There were no requests.

9. Comments from the Council

An opportunity was provided for Regional Council members to present a brief summary of current events. The Regional Council is not allowed to propose, discuss, deliberate or take action at the meeting on any matter in the summary, unless the specific matter is properly noticed for legal action.

Mayor Carlat wished Chair Weiers a happy birthday.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

Chair

Secretary