

Environmental Planning Advisory Committee (EPAC) Meeting Summary

Summary of 9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2025, Meeting

Full Video Recording (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qausn4bd9m4>

ATTENDEES

Voting Members

Abigail Okrent, PDEQ
Alejandra Fraijo, Kimley-Horn
Becca Cammack, Tucson Airport Authority
Brendan Lyons, SAHBA
Camden Walsh, Tohono O'odham Nation
Charles Stack, Oro Valley citizen
Christina McVie, Tucson Bird Alliance
Frank Bonillas, City of Tucson
Josue Licea, City of South Tucson
Kimberly Baeza, Pima County
Lydia Barker, City of Tucson

Mike Osborne, Town of Marana
(designated proxy)
Nicole Gillett, City of Tucson
Sarah Hite, PDEQ (designated proxy)
Scott Bennet, Town of Oro Valley
(designated proxy)

Non-Voting Members

Katie Predick, Arizona Sonoran Desert
Museum

Staff Lead

Mead Mier, Planning Manager

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was conducted virtually and called to order at 9:33 a.m. by the chair, Abigail Okrent, Pima County Department of Environmental Quality.

2. In-kind Form

PAG Planning Manager Mead Mier informed participants of the in-kind form, and members were asked to confirm their estimated in-kind time for the meeting.

3. Approval of EPAC Feb. 6, 2025, Meeting Summary

Video Timestamp: [16:08](#)

Action: A motion to approve Feb. 6, 2025, EPAC meeting summary with the spelling correction of Brendan Lyons' name was made by Ms. Okrent, and seconded by Christina McVie, Tucson Bird Alliance. The motion passed unanimously.

4. EPAC Top Environmental Issues List for 2025

Video Timestamp: [21:30](#)

Ms. Mier provided a brief introduction to the EPAC Top Environmental Issues List for 2025. Members were reminded of the process and previous discussions involved in developing the list. Additionally, members had the opportunity to discuss any further refinements to the list.

Action: Ms. Okrent moved to approve the April 24 version of the EPAC Top Environmental Issues list for 2025, which was seconded by Ms. McVie. The item was opened up for discussion.

Action: A motion to close the discussion was made by Ms. Okrent, and was seconded by Ms. McVie. The motion to close discussion was passed with one nay by Mr. Lyons.

Action: A substitute motion to amend the Issues List to include the sentence “Before advancing or recommending any regional environmental planning recommendations, this body will consider economically sound environmental health strategies with balanced benefits to both private and public stakeholders” was made by Brendan Lyons, SAHBA. The substitute motion failed to get a second.

Action: The original motion to approve the April 24 version of the EPAC Top Environmental Issues list for 2025 was passed with one nay by Mr. Lyons.

The presentation can be found [HERE](#).

5. Wildlife Corridors and Crossing Infrastructure in Pima County Overview

Video Timestamp: [38:38](#)

After a brief introduction from Ms. Mier and Ms. Okrent, panel representatives shared information about various types of local wildlife connectivity studies and diverse investments, including overpasses, underpasses, bat boxes and fencing.

Jeff Gangon, Wildlife Connectivity Program Lead with Arizona Game and Fish, presented background information on wildlife-vehicle collisions and habitat fragmentation to the members. The presentation included statistics on wildlife fatalities due to vehicle collisions, wildlife movement maps highlighting habitat fragmentation for multiple species, and suggestions for region-wide improvements in wildlife linkages.

Colin Beach, Biologist with Arizona Game and Fish, presented to the members on regional connectivity studies. This included statistics on various wildlife movements that cross or meet barriers along several state routes and regional roads, demonstrating the benefits of past efforts and the ongoing needs within Pima County.

Kris Gade, Director of Pima County Conservation Lands and Resources, connected the discussion to the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. The presentation highlighted efforts toward habitat preservation and connectivity thus far and future goals, including land acquisition and the development of wildlife crossings over the CAP canal and roads.

Audrey Navarro, Biology Program Manager at the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), provided information on State Routes 77 and 86, including the construction, utilization, benefits, and next steps for the wildlife underpass. She highlighted the grant award for the upcoming ADOT Arizona Statewide Wildlife Connectivity Assessment Tool and Action Plan project.

Carolyn Campbell, past Executive Director of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, gave a brief review of historical RTA-related efforts to improve wildlife connectivity in the region and discussed current recommendations for future funding to meet remaining priorities.

Town of Marana and Tohono O'odham Nation representatives were on the agenda but were unable to attend.

Members asked the panelists questions. Discussions covered a variety of topics, such as preferred solutions to wildlife linkage issues, retrofits versus advanced planning, cost sharing, ongoing maintenance and monitoring needs, resource priorities, and other local projects.

All presentations are available [HERE](#).

This was an information-only item.

6. Future Agenda Items

Members requested the following items:

- Information on the Green Valley Instream Recharge Project
- Information on the Catalina State Park conservation acquisition

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.