

Regional Council Meeting Summary

Meeting Summary of Thurs., September 25, 2025

Full Video Recording (YouTube): [YouTube Recorded Video](#)

"We encourage and uphold the importance of regional collaboration as the Regional Council addresses regional priorities and pursues regional solutions."

To view the full Regional Collaboration and Unity Pledge, visit: PAGregion.com/pledge

Regional Council Members Present: Mayor Jon Post
General Ted Maxwell
Mayor Tom Murphy
Supervisor Matt Heinz
Mayor Roxanna Valenzuela
Mayor Joe Winfield
Chairman Verlon Jose
Chairman Julian Hernandez
Mayor Regina Romero

Regional Council Members Absent: None

Staff Lead: Michael J. Ortega, P.E., Executive Director

The following is an audio-to-text transcription of the **Regional Council Meeting held on Thursday, Sept. 25, 2025**, and is being used as the written summary of the discussion. Minor changes were made to the transcription to include grammar or formatting for clarity, YouTube links/time stamps, spelling corrections and the addition of the agenda number or items based on the posted agenda.

Agenda

1. Call to Order (1:44 p.m.)

[Item #1 Video Link](#)

Mayor Romero: All right, we are starting, convening the meeting of the Regional Council for Pima Association of Governments. Item 1 is call to order. Item 2 is... Oh, do you need to do roll call, Jacki?

MEMBERS PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

- Mayor Romero
- Mayor Winfield
- Mayor Tom Murphy
- Mayor Roxanna Valenzuela
- General Ted Maxwell
- Mayor Jon Post
- Chairman Julian Hernandez
- Chairman Verlon Jose
- Supervisor Matt Heinz

Mayor Romero: All right, Item 2 is Call to the Audience.

2. Call to the Audience (Remote Access Option)

[Item #2 Video Link](#)

Adam Ledford: Madam Chair, there are no speakers at this time.

Mayor Romero: Thank you. Item 3 is meeting summary approval of July 31, 2025.

3. Meeting Summary Approval of July 31, 2025

[Item #3 Video Link](#)

Mayor Winfield: Motion to approve.

Mayor Post: Second.

Mayor Romero: There is a motion to approve the July 31, 2025, meeting summary as presented. There's a motion and a second. Any further discussion on this motion? Hearing none all those in favor, please signify by saying, aye.

Board Members: Aye.

Mayor Romero: Any against? Motion carries. Item 4 is Mission and Overview of Pima Association of Governments (PAG).

4. Mission and Overview of Pima Association of Governments (PAG)

[Item #4 Video Link](#)

Mayor Romero: This item was requested by myself and the vice chair of PAG, because we have some new individuals and wanted to make sure we were clear about the mission of Pima Association of Governments, Mr. Ortega.

Michael J. Ortega: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, this is really an overview. We've given you a lot of information in your packet. It's pretty self-explanatory, but we do have a brief presentation. So, Jamie Brown will be leading us through a brief presentation to go over that. So, thank you, Madam Chair. Jamie.

Director of Strategic Planning, Programing and Policy, Jamie Brown provided the Regional Council with a presentation on PAG's mission and an overview of PAG's federal, state, and policy responsibilities. Discussion points included:

- Primary roles and responsibilities
 - PAG funding
 - Required deliverables
 - PAG membership
 - Economic development
 - Opportunities for planning outside of transportation such as homelessness
- **Audio Presentation:** [Mission and Overview of PAG](#)
 - **Presentation Slides:** [Item 4 Mission and Overview of PAG](#)

Mayor Murphy: Can you just touch on, because it's come up in the past. You have the RMAP. You have the TIP and you have the OWP. Can we discuss anything in an OWP that's not already in the TIP, which is not already in the RMAP? Can you just touch on the population of each one of those? Can they be operated separately? Because my understanding is you got to have it in the RMAP first, then it gets in the TIP, and then we discuss it on a regular basis on the OWP while we're updating the other two. Can you just kind of touch on where projects have to be populated?

Jamie Brown: Thank you, Madam Chair, Council Member Murphy, great question. Thank you very much. Sometimes we have a slide that shows how various plans are nested. So in terms of the transportation plans and projects, things like that, like the roadway projects, we start with the bigger square of the RMAP, the long-range plan must include everything. It's kind of represents the universe of what can be funded. Then within that, within the five years of that, the first five years, you've got the TIP but it's nested within the RMAP. So the TIP can only include projects and programs that are consistent with the long-range plan. We also include the RTA as well within that RMAP, even though the RTA will be 20 years, not five years, but it's inclusive of what's in the RMAP. In terms of the Overall Work Program, it's related because it will identify the fact that we need to work on developing the long-range transportation plan and updating it or the transportation improvement program. But it won't specifically identify transportation projects and programs like you would see in the

long-range plan that our member agencies implement. The Overall Work Program is really focused on the PAG activities, the planning studies that we do that help facilitate that planning and programming, if that makes any sense.

Mayor Murphy: Yeah.

Mayor Romero: Any other? Council Member Maxwell.

General Maxwell: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, a follow-up, and it's probably based on the nexus with federal and state law. So one of the things you pointed out, both of them are interesting, both of them are infrastructure connections. Under the Arizona Revised Statutes 48-5301, it defines that it's for municipalities or regions over 400,000 and less than 1.2 million people. What happens when we go over 1.2 million?

Jamie Brown: Madam Chair, Council Member Maxwell, that's a great question. I am looking over at Mr. Ortega, Legal Counsel, to see –

Mayor Romero: This is for the Regional Council or?

General Maxwell: Yeah, PAG falls under all of them. The interesting thing was the nexus with federal and state law, which was the third slide in the deck, showed IJA, and it showed the Arizona Revised Statutes, and it was the one that references the establishment in 2004 of the RTA under PAG, because it's all part of it. And I know it might be more of an RTA question, but it really is one that I've had for a while, once we go over 1.2 million. I mean, we expected to be above it already, and we're not. We're going to approach it sometime in the future, more than likely. So, I was just curious, is that something any of us who work in public policy should be starting to work to change those population numbers?

Michael J. Ortega: Madam Chair, we'll find out. Short answer is we don't know right this second, but we'll bring back some thoughts for you.

General Maxwell: All right. Thank you, Jamie. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mayor Romero: Of course, thank you. Any other questions, comments, observations? One of the reasons why I wanted to, and the vice chair, we both wanted to have this presentation, is because there's some change that happened in terms of who's representing which jurisdictions on PAG. And we really have not spent -- at least in the last six years that I have been sitting at this table, we have really not spent enough time understanding what a transportation management area, metropolitan planning organization, and a council of governments, what they really are, and what we could do with these designations. A lot of it is planning, and we see that in the RMAP, and we see that in all the documents that have been put together, the TIP and Overall Work Program. But I don't think we've spent enough time as a Council in part of our governance to be a planning organization where we have visionary goals, right? And part of the work that we can do is in economic development and water quality planning and even public safety and homelessness and community services and assistance planning. We spent a lot of time arguing about the RTA Next. I really want us to dig in at the PAG portion of our meetings to really think in a visionary way as to how we're going to continue growing and thriving as a region. And that pertains to the planning work that we can do, and even in environmental work that we need to do. So, I want us to remember that, and I just want to reiterate to all of us that we have an amazing opportunity through Pima Association of Governments and our separate designations to be able to make a difference in the quality of life and the economic opportunity that we create as a region. So, I will be digging into this piece. Some of you know this about me very well, I'm a planner at heart, and I really like to put together action planning, strategic planning for us so that we can move on to the next level of creating opportunity for our region. So, I will be digging in in terms of our responsibilities as a TMA, as a planning organization, and as a regional council, and looking at the different funding streams and seeing how best we all can work together, come to the table, and move us forward. That's what we should be doing as a region. I just wanted to add that.

Chairman Jose?

Chairman Jose: Madam Chair, board members, council members, committee

members, or whatever our titles are. Thank you for the discussion on the agenda item. It is a great agenda item because I, too, sit here, and in my previous roles with the Tohono O'odham Nation, have been aware of PAG and RTA. Sometimes I question myself, what am I doing sitting here? What am I doing sitting here? Because the people ask me, you participate in all these meetings and all these boards and these things. What is it doing for our nation? How is it affecting our nation? We talk about projects and different things and that, and I know they're jurisdictional, then there are all these other barriers and so forth, whatever, that come up. And the question that always gets asked of me is that, what does that mean for the Tohono O'odham Nation? When we have 2.8 million acres of land, we have over 700 miles of road, improved and unimproved road, and we know that we are on federal land, but the majority of our nation sits in Pima County. And as I mentioned before, you've heard me say this here before, is that of our 36,000 federally recognized enrolled members of the nation, the majority of our members live in your cities and towns. And so I bring that up a lot, is that, I think, Tohono O'odham Nation is kind of looking beyond what's in it for me directly, but what's in it for the whole of us. What's in it for the whole of us in Pima County? What's in it for the whole of us in the state of Arizona? Maybe I should leave that discussion for another. I was going to say the federal government, but that's a whole other discussion. And so, I sit here and I wonder, what am I really doing here? And I have to be the advocate, I have to be the one to go back and when people ask me about it, what is this? I have to explain to them what it is. And maybe that's something that we've got to get better at ourselves, at marketing who we are and what we do, especially now, when we got something that we're pushing to put out there, as that we just discussed. We've got to get better at our marketing on who PAG is, who RTA is, who are you, what do you do? You all are very, very busy, you all have governments to run yourselves, but we spent a lot of time coming here, and rightfully so. And we walk away from the table. Maybe we've had some disagreements, or we agreed to disagree, or however you say that. But I often walk around out of this meeting and I'm saying, what's in it for the Tohono O'odham Nation? What's in it for the people that I'm responsible for, that live in your jurisdiction? And I try to advocate for the best foot forward saying, well, you're always going to prove this, and it's going to prove that, and the project going on here, yes, I know it's taking some time, but

nothing ever gets fixed overnight. So all I'm saying here, I agree with you, your vision as a planner and so forth, we can plan and move forward. But if we're going to ask for the support that we're asking for, for our organizations, meaning PAG and RTA, then we've got to get better at marketing who we are and what we do. Because I will ask, at some point if PAG and RTA maybe can come present to my council, my 22-member council, which we represent the 11 sub-political districts of the Nation, but like I said, a lot of our members live in other jurisdictions. Well, leave it at that, because I would tell you a little bit about history, but you might already know it or you might not know it. Arizona and Sonora is originally, has been verified and solidified as the aboriginal lands of the Tohono O'odham, and we're here from the beginning of time, and we're not going anywhere soon. But we want to, and we choose to be at the table to see how we're going to advance for everyone. But I tell you, that's the question I have when I sit there and I walk out of here, what is there for us, the Tohono O'odham Nation? Maybe not right now, maybe I don't see anything direct, but I see things indirectly that affect our Nation and our people. Because I have to drive almost every day from south to Tucson or from south to Phoenix, or Chairman Hernandez and I just drove all the way up to Flagstaff the other day, and I was very impressed on that road, man. I hadn't been on that road for a long time, but it was a long time coming. And that's what we can do when we do what you're saying, Madam President, about that planning. And we see all these wheels turning in here, but the people on the outside don't see that. That's all I'm saying. So thank you for bringing this topic to the table, and I look forward to more discussion on that matter. Thank you.

Mayor Romero: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any others? Council Member Heinz.

Supervisor Heinz: Council Member, am I? OK. All right. Fair enough. Oh, this is fixed now, right? That's cool. Thanks for that. Since this is kind of a where are we going discussion, might it be time, and this would be a question for our attorney as well, because I don't know that I have the answer to this, but she's working on it maybe, I hope. Should it just be the nine people here that are on the Regional Council? The statute says that it can be other entities that run, basically, they operate a transportation agency. Well, I would say that's the University of Arizona,

Pima College. What about our school boards? What about the airport authority? Do we have all the folks on the Regional Council that we should have, and if we decide as a group, I think by maybe a majority that we don't, and we want to expand that membership to some of those other entities, how would that happen? I'm just kind of curious. So that's just a thought for the future. We don't obviously have to do anything, but I'm curious. I think more voices could only improve what it is we're doing, trying to do, and doing for the community.

Mayor Romero: Thank you for the comments. I really appreciate that. I've been thinking about that at the City Council level, and I've felt for some time that there's an economic development void, and that there's a lot of silos in economic development in our region. And so we've taken it upon ourselves on the City of Tucson side to really take the reins as a Mayor and Council of our economic development planning that I see here. And also with school districts, the success of school districts within our city is an important piece of economic development. So, we are going to start that work with our school districts. We've added an agenda item to talk about our partnerships with Pima County and other regional governments. We could do something similar here. You would have to change state law or federal law to expand the people that sit at the table, but that doesn't mean we can't bring our school districts to the table, add them in our committees as we move forward. It's an important conversation we should be having, and so I will be adding agenda items at our PAG meetings that will have us discussing what our vision is for the future and economic development. I see that with MAG, there's community initiatives that they lead in. And this is part of our material that was shared with us for the item, and I would highly encourage that we all read it right, and it'll get our mind going and our ideas going. But in MAG, they have, outside of the transportation planning work that they do, they have an initiative that talks about homelessness, that talks about economic development, environmental work. These are important issues that we should be talking about, and we should definitely make sure that the voices of the O'odham people and the Yaqui people are part of that conversation. We should be able to answer each and every one of us. We should be able to answer quickly how our residents at each of our jurisdictions benefit from sitting at the PAG table, and so now that we have the RTA Next at the table, it still needs to be voted on, and there's

a lot of work that needs to happen there, but we have a different PAG Council, and we have different attorneys and a different executive director. We have an opportunity to advance these conversations and the visionary work that needs to happen at a council of government. So, if there are no other comments, I just wanted to explain and put into the record why I added this item, and the vice chair felt equally passionate about adding this item. If there are no more questions or comments we move on to the next item, which is item 5 consent agenda items.

5. Consent Agenda Items

[Item #5 Video Link](#)

a. Program Highlights Report

b. Regional Transportation Revenues Update

Michael J. Ortega: Madam chair, this is informational and what you'll see on future, both PAG and RTA, but on the agenda is more of the routine stuff, contracts, those kinds of things. And some of these reports are pretty standard and we provide you the materials. If you have questions, you can ask us, but there's no action required on this item.

Mayor Romero: I'm sorry, I was busy doing something.

Michael J. Ortega: We're moving on to item 6, Madam Chair.

Mayor Romero: No action on item 5? OK, so item 6 is review and recommend approval of FY 2025–FY 2029 PAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2025.020

6. Review and recommend approval of FY 2025–FY 2029 PAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2025.020

[Item #6 Video Link](#)

Michael J. Ortega: Madam Chair. We do have a party available to answer questions. Material was provided to you. I am recommending approval of this and if you have questions, the party is available to make a presentation if you'd like. Otherwise, a motion would be in order on this one to approve. What we do need to bring in, we do need a formal adoption on that.

Mayor Romero: We have a motion to approve the TIP amendment number 2025.00 to the PAG fiscal year 2025 to fiscal year 2029 transportation improvement program.

Mayor Murphy: Move to approve.

Mayor Post: Second.

Mayor Romero: There is a motion and a second, any further discussion on this motion? Hearing none, all those in favor, please signify by saying, aye.

Board Members: Aye.

Mayor Romero: Any against? Motion carries. Item 7 is the Arizona Department of Transportation South Central District Projects Update. Mr. Ortega.

7. Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) - Southcentral District Projects Update

[Item #7 Video Link](#)

Michael J. Ortega: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have a couple of folks here. Jeremy Moore is going to make a brief presentation. So, this is really a follow up to the conversations we had in the creation of the RTA Next plan. If you remember, we talked about the RAAC funding, the regional funding that comes from ADOT to PAG basically. And so, there was a lot of conversation, a lot of questions. And if you remember, we shifted a significant amount of funding from RTA Next to the ADOT

component, if you remember that column got big at the very end. And I thought it would be appropriate and important for an update on the current projects just to give you an overview of that. And so we asked ADOT to come. So with that, I'll turn it over to Jeremy Moore who's the Assistant District Engineer for the South Central District.

Jeremy Moore, Assistant District Engineer, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) presented a status update on Regional Allocation Advisory Committee (RAAC) projects within Pima County. The presentation included updates on specific projects such as I-10, Kino to Country Club; I-10, Ina to Ruthrauff and I-19, Irvington TI.

- **Audio Presentation:** [Southcentral District Projects Update](#)
- **Presentation Slides:** [Item 7 ADOT South Central District Projects Update](#)

Mayor Romero: Thank you, Mr. Moore. I really appreciate the presentation. I guess my question is, what's the difference between design-build versus low bid?

Jeremy Moore: The low bid ... ADOT, they hire the designer. We get those guys on board and then we go through the entire design with the ADOT staff and the agencies that are where the project affects them. And then, once we get that set of plans, a bid ready, we then advertise it to the community and then contractors that are interested will go and bid the job. And basically the low bid, the lowest price usually technically wins the project, whereas the design-build what we do is we solicit for technical proposals. And so the contractor will hire the designer and they work together. So, as the contractor knows their means and methods, they know how they want to build the job. And so they utilize the designer to help get that most efficient construction and means and methods. And then what they do is ADOT will have a group of 5 to 7 people, and then we interview them. We look at their proposals. We look at their statement of qualifications. They get scored on any innovations that they bring to the table, and then that's one component of the score.

The other component is going to be the price that they bring to the table. So, when you add those two up, then they come up with a total score. The highest score is going to win the proposal.

Mayor Romero: Why is design-build chosen for one project and low bid chosen for another?

Jeremy Moore: For this one, we chose Kino and Country Club to do the design-build because we felt that there was a lot of innovation on that project, and we wanted to see outside of the DCR, the Design Concept Report, that was done back in 2020. We wanted to see if there were any other innovations that they could bring to the table to build that project. And so, when you looked at that one, it was Country Club was supposed to be one job and Kino was supposed to be the second job. So, we thought there was innovation to tie the two together and get that job out a lot quicker instead of doing an 18-month design, and then a 2-year construction period, another 18-month design, and another 2-year, we pulled them both in, and we got them out and we should be done with that project in 3 years, so –

Mayor Romero: And why was low bid chosen for I-19 and Irvington.

Jeremy Moore: So, I-19, there really wasn't a whole lot of innovation to step out of bounds on that one. It was just strictly just a traffic interchange. And so, to Mike's point, when we were talking about different delivery methods, CMAR low bid and design bid build, there's going to be price differences in those. And so we just felt that to keep the price where it needed to line up with and the scope of the project and opportunity for innovation, that's where it kind of slid into.

Mayor Romero: So, Mr. Moore, what I'm about to say does not reflect on you personally. It's my experience with ADOT and projects on I-10 and I-19. When Irvington I-10 was proposed by the City of Tucson, and we requested that ADOT invest on the Irvington I-19 interchange, I was a newly elected council member in 2007. It has taken 18 years to get here and so you must imagine my exasperation on the lack of investment from ADOT into the City of Tucson. I have my theories as to

why that has happened for such a long time. The lack of investment in our interchanges on I-10 going to the southeast and the lack of investment on the interchanges on I-19 going to the south. There's been some movement on Valencia and some movement on Ajo, but Irvington and I-19 has been a bane of our existence because of the congestion that that area has seen the last 20 years. And so, I guess my question is, how is it, and I know we have an ADOT Board Member here, how is it that we continue advocating for a region? Because what we have noticed as well a few things, what we have noticed here in the City of Tucson is that both along I-10 headed east, especially, specifically after South 6th Avenue into the east, we have not seen in decades investment in our interchanges. But we also have not seen investment in cleaning our interstates and landscaping and beautification. That's the huge case with I-19. And I-19 is the entry to our city and to our region from the south. And so, it has been very, very difficult for us to, we always request maintenance because there's a lot of trash on I-19, there's a lot of trash on or around our interstates. And so, I just would like a commitment from ADOT that you will enhance the landscaping and cleaning and beautification pieces on I-19 throughout the I-19 corridor and on I-10, and the other piece is regarding the commitment of funding for interchanges on I-10 headed east, where the growth areas of our city are happening. It's congested, it's old and it's dirty. We need to make sure that we have commitments as we move forward from ADOT. So, I really appreciate Mr. Ortega that you requested this update, but I think that every meeting, we should have this type of update unless it's not absolutely necessary regarding the budgets and how the decisions are made. Because I really do think that this Council should be helping give ADOT the input that you all need to make budgetary decisions in the coming years and into the future.

Jeremy Moore: Absolutely, no, I appreciate that and I think one of the things that we were talking with Mike on is coming up with what we think the plan looks like, and I completely agree with you on going out east on I-10, and I think that we bring that list back to the team, the TPC and the TMC and then we have those regional discussions on do we feel that this plan we've laid out is appropriate? Does it work and take that input and take those suggestions and then we can tweak as need to, to make sure that we're getting the best for the region.

Mayor Romero: Council Member Maxwell, and then or Mr. Ortega.

General Maxwell: Madam Chair, appreciate you can go either way with which other one first, but you want to go ahead, Mike, then I'll follow you up because I've got some ideas.

Michael J. Ortega: Madam Chair and members of the board, a couple of things to just point out in fairness to Jeremy. Thank you for taking one for the team there Jeremy. Appreciate that. I think the bottom line here and the spirit of this update is really to start to bring clarity on the dollars that come to the region and how those dollars are programmed and so forth. And so, if you remember when we went through the exercise on the RTA Next plan, there's a lot of conversation about it. But I also think that, as I mentioned to you, I believe here, we had one project, one project that was over a billion dollars, just one. When you do the math, and you add or you're basically allocating \$150 million a year, I'll let you do the math on how long that one project would take to get completed, right? And so the conversation, I think, is priorities of the region, but also incorporating the expertise that ADOT brings, because ADOT's perspective is different than ours. They're looking at the main line, looking at all of the operational pieces. And so the key, I think, though, is to bring all of that together and have an open conversation with you about where that goes and where we're headed. And I think that's the spirit and intent here, so that, unfortunately, there's only a five-year horizon today. And what I've challenged and I've suggested is, let's make that at least 10, if not 20 years, so that we're really looking at all the dollars and programming out. And that makes folks nervous, because they don't like to think longer than that. But we have to, because that's what our horizon is. So I want to give Jeremy a little grace on that, but I wanted to also let you know that's a spirit and intent of where I think you will see more frequent updates, so that you can see where your projects are, but also in the context of the region as a whole. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mayor Romero: And it's about the funds that come to the region, but also the conversations that we have to have with ADOT about the priorities we need the state

and ADOT to put into our region. So, and again, I preface my comments very clearly that this is not against Mr. Moore, but something that I need to put on the record, so that we can put our facts on the table, and then see how we're going to fix anything that's not working. Council Member Maxwell.

General Maxwell: Madam Chair, thank you. So, I'm going to be a little bit more direct. Here's the challenge, money. Without the RTA Next, this region will end up having \$49 million that comes through it direct to PAG, period, from the federal and state. The dollars that we have in the state budget right now, this is why there is no knight in shining armor to come save our region. I fully agree with you on the importance of taking care of all these roads. The largest contract we approved since I've been on the board was for Kino to Country Club. Richard Searle, the Cochise County representative on the State Transportation Board, said, "Is this number true?" And then he deferred to us. He deferred to District 2, which is, that's Pima County, because, one, he uses that same road and he reminded the board, "You need to keep working on I-10 east as well." We do not have the money, 71% of the state transportation funds goes to pavement preservation. I'm going to talk now, Maricopa, not the County, the City. The City of Maricopa has showed up at every single state transportation board meeting for the last five years talking to us about State Route 347. They've brought pictures of the people who have passed away on that. They've had kids and parents come in and tell us how they get stuck on these things. We have limited funds. And you know what, Mayor? We're lucky, because we get 13% dedicated of the money, Maricopa gets 37%, Greater Arizona, all the other 13 counties get 50% of it. Vinny Gallegos, who's CYMPO's Executive Director, yesterday at Streets and Roads, talked about how he's very proud of what they've done. They've made a commitment for \$80 million, and they got \$1.7 million. The money's just not there. So, what do we need to do as a region? Because I fully agree with you. First off, the design-build versus low-bid, two different things. And Irvington's been a mess on how long it's taken. Fully agreed. One of the biggest engagements we've had at the State Transportation Board, and through ADOT, through the Southcentral District, which is what we are in, and that's what Jeremy, they run, was you can't do it over two holidays. We don't want to kill the economic vibrancy of that region, because Irvington is so important to the economy of that part

of the City of Tucson. So they've been working with them and that actually resulted in the delay that has gone further. Is it acceptable since the time you've been a board member, 2007? Absolutely not.

Mayor Romero: 18 years.

General Maxwell: I understand. So, let me tell you the story at the last State Transportation Board meeting, OK? [\[INAUDIBLE 2:57:02\]](#) We're about to approve our five-year plan. And as you know, in the State Transportation Board process, we approve a five-year plan and we've already begun the next five-year plan. The TIP's only one every 4 years, so we can put stuff in it and say, "OK, we're going to get those things done." Ours changes all the time. Lyons Springs, it's a portion of SR 260, 4 lanes, 4 lanes, it's still 2. We were facing the decision to take that out of the five-year plan and put Maricopa 347 into it. I'll give the county's DOT a great lot of credit. He stood up there in like, 1991, we were scheduled to be done in '93. And he literally sat there and he just rolled through all the years. We just approved it. We ended up approving two expansion projects for Maricopa and Lyons Springs. And all their citizens were getting up and talking about the number of deaths on these roads. But because of their advocacy, because they were there, because they've been beating on us, they ended up making it. We put off pavement preservation, which is a terrible thing to do from a road maintainer, on US 40, SR 89, and another one of the state routes. So my point is, we have to get better at Pima County being vocal. Vocal at the state board, and vocal locally. Because those who show up, as with anything in life, are heard. So, fully agree, and I'll tell you, to give the Southcentral office credit, Jeremy is fighting as much as anybody, not for us to move some of the money that we moved into RTA Next. Now, that was us, the board deciding we want to take control of these funds and say where they're going to be spent. Thus, the addition of Rita Road TI, recognition of that importance on the southeast. So it's there. But it's the funding. It's not a straight ADOT thing. I do think it'd be great for you to come back at some point, Jeremy, and give the board a true description of the pros and cons of those three different benefits. Because design-build, I believe South Mountain was done with design build, correct?

Jeremy Moore: That is correct.

General Maxwell: Took years off the completion and saved money. Did the contractors probably make more money? Absolutely. Because it's to their benefit to get it done early, get it done on time, and get innovative. Low bid is just low bid and it's a tough process. And I think that's kind of what Irvington got. So I fully appreciate your concern and your advocacy for the City of Tucson and Interstate 10 and 19. On the cleanup, here's the challenge. If we spend money on all that, we spend money on any of the preservation, then we have less money to put into the roads. Now, I'll give you a story from Sahuarita. I actually met this lady for the first time at the town of Sahuarita. I was driving back from a meeting at Payson, and we'd had a caller call in. Had a hard time because of her connection, so we asked her to give us her number, and I called her on the drive back. And she went off on me about how bad Interstate 19 looks down in the vicinity of Sahuarita. We put her in touch with ADOT staff. She now leads a group of how many citizens?

Jeremy Moore: Almost 100.

General Maxwell: And it's looking immaculate down in that part. I understand we can't always rely on the citizenry, but if it's important to us, I think we can get our citizenry stepping up and set an example, and they, one, will learn from the next, will learn from the next, and we can improve some of those other things. It's all about the money.

Mayor Romero: Well, I think advocacy is something that us Mayors do all the time, and so I'm going to continue doing it. I understand, but as you well said, the squeaky wheels get the oil. So, I have said this for a long, long time, and I will continue to say it. I think that cleanliness, landscaping, beautification shouldn't be cut, and that's why I asked about low bid, right? Because those are the sacrifices that always go first when you have low bids, landscaping and public art and beautification, and that shouldn't be the case. So, I'm going to continue advocating and being a loud advocate for making sure that we're investing in the right areas and investing on interstate I-19 all the way to Nogales and I-10 and anything that is I-10 in the City of

Tucson.

General Maxwell: And, Madam Chair, I agree with you. I think we should decide on some of the projects that maybe didn't make the RTA cuts, some of the things that we as a region want to advocate for, the SR 189 down in Nogales, the overfly. That's when Maricopa County, Pima County, and Nogales came together, and the communities and the big challenge is a lot of times the difference. What made the difference on Maricopa 347 is the town, the City of Maricopa, which will tell you they're one of the most conservative cities in the state. Mayor Murphy might argue that, but one of the most conservative cities in the states, they self-imposed a half-cent sales tax, their mayor and council. They said, "We're good. If our voters don't like the fact that we're doing it, that's fine, but we have to get this done." And that combined with \$20 million from Pinal County pushed it over the top so we could get the projects done. So there's a lot of different ways, love to have that conversation again. I do think it's important for us as a region, if we're going to start getting more oversight on contracts and how at least to know, understand the difference between low-bid, design-build, CMAR, because they all have pros and cons. But I think design-build has been proven to be an incredibly successful one. I wish we'd see it on more of our projects.

Mayor Romero: Any others?

Mayor Murphy: And Jeremy, next time you come back. I remember we had an ADOT meeting down in Sahuarita, and the presentation on what the needs are against what the funding is, it was mind-blowing. I don't remember if it was in the billions of dollars, but I think it was, the shortfall. So, if you can find that again with that type of an update, because the needs are there. But if you're talking about landscaping or death, as you brought up that's where you have to make those cuts or where the money goes. But I was just stunned on how large the need was, if we were going to get the roads or keep the roads to a decent condition index. And it was mind-blowing. So, you can include that maybe the next time. I think it would give some clarity on how difficult the lift actually is.

Mayor Romero: Chairman Jose.

Chairman Jose: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I don't know if I'm just here as a token, or I raised my hand several times, but others spoke before me, but that's all right. I just wanted to say thank you for the presentation, good information, and you brought back some memories of me to the Sunset Road project, I don't know, six years ago or so, whatever, when they were first doing all the work on there. And there was an area, an archaeological area that was very significant, and we were called there. And the evidence, my understanding that people came from around the world to look at what was found there. And I say that, but that just solidifies how unique this area is to civilization. I think it dated back like 4,000-some years or something like that. And that's why it's so important to us. And I agree in part with some of the comments that were made, and the I-19, it runs through the Tohono O'odham Nation. And thank you for sharing what you shared, because that's right, we at the Tohono O'odham Nation do some work with MAG as well, too. And I'm telling you, man, if PAG could learn a little bit from MAG, I think we should see, watch what they're doing, because they're moving, they're moving, but they're working together, and they're making things happen. And that's what I was going to say. And what are we doing? What are we doing as this Association of Governments, or this Regional Transportation Authority? What are we doing in terms to advocate that, you all advocate for your reasons, wherever you go to the state or to the federal wherever, but, do we have something in our toolbox that we can also advocate for what we do here? Whether it's our jurisdiction or not, but it's in our area that we all come to, we should be advocating for that all the time. Gila River, just years ago, and it's been a long time in the making. We have been going to the federal government, have been going to the state to ask for funding for I-10 that goes to the Gila River. And then they were appropriated, what, \$90 million a few years ago, and something like that, but that didn't come overnight. And that included us other tribes as well advocating for them. So, we're advocating for each other, but I don't really see us doing that here and we need to do that. We need to unify and advocate for each other. I don't disagree that I-19 needs some work on there. I drive it all the time. But you're right, if you look, and you probably know this better than anyone else, you have the statistics and the data on how many accidents happened

in that particular area. And what happens when that road shuts down, it impacts other areas of our cities and towns and people wanting to get home. And we don't really have any other objectives, but to just find a way to go on the old Nogales highway or? The other day there was an accident, and I couldn't even get out of the casino because traffic was backed up so far. And our director of public safety was saying, "Look, if you need to get out, you need to get out now because traffic is getting really, really, really bad." And it was really, really bad. And unfortunately, I think two lives were lost in that accident or something like that. You can't put a price tag on someone's life. So, it is congested out there. You all know it. You've all seen it. And what are we doing about it? When we have a responsibility to the citizens of our area, to the citizens of southern Arizona. What are we doing to try to improve that? We're going to roll up our sleeves and tuck together instead of sitting around this table arguing about what is my city and my town going to get? Because we're not doing that. We're not doing that good enough. And that's why I was excited about planning and so forth like that. But I kid you not, when I talk about PAG, I'm going to be honest with you. People laugh at us. Other areas laugh at us. They say, "Oh, yeah, you guys are going through some challenges, right?" Yeah, we are. But we're going to come out of it and we're going to come out of it stronger, I hope. And that's not upon me, that's upon all of us sitting around this table. So, thank you for your presentation. Look forward to more.

Mayor Romero: Thank you so much, Mr. Moore. I really appreciate it. Did you want to add anything else, Mr. Ortega? Anyone else? Thank you so much, really appreciate it. And I appreciate all the comments and look forward to moving additional items and more information sharing and strategy planning at these meetings. Item 8 is adjournment. We will be adjourned. I really appreciate all of you. Have a wonderful rest of your week.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a meeting summary of the Pima Association of Governments (PAG) Regional Council meeting held on Sep. 25, 2025. This summary is not intended to be verbatim. It serves as the summary of action items taken at the meeting upon approval by the PAG Regional Council. An audio recording is available upon request and serves as the official minutes. I further certify that a quorum was present.



Michael J. Ortega, P.E.
Executive Director

In compliance with the Arizona Open Meeting Law, the PAG Regional Council legal actions and this meeting summary are posted online, and an audio recording which serves as the official minutes of the meeting is available upon request. In addition, a meeting video is also available at: [YouTube Recorded Video](#)