



Rural Transportation Advocacy Council

Linking Arizona to the Global Economy

Central Arizona Governments
Central Yavapai Metro. Planning Org.
Lake Havasu Metro. Planning Org.
MetroPlan Greater Flagstaff
Northern Arizona Council of Gov'ts.
Sierra Vista Metro. Planning Org.
Southeastern Arizona Governments Org.
Sun Corridor Metro. Planning Org.
Western Arizona Council of Gov'ts.
Yuma Metropolitan Planning Org.

RTAC BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 24, 2024 1:00 PM

Virtual via ZOOM

Board members present:

Paul David (Chairman)	Supervisor, Graham County (SEAGO)
Nancy Campbell (Vice Chair)	Councilmember, Lake Havasu City (LHMPO)
Tom Armstrong	Vice Mayor, Town of Chino Valley (CYMPO)
Maria Cruz	Councilmember, City of San Luis (YMPO)
Bill Diak	Mayor, City of Page (NACOG Alt.)
Steve Miller	Supervisor, Pinal County (SCMPO)
Duce Minor	Supervisor, La Paz County (WACOG Alt.)
Alton Shepherd	Supervisor, Apache County (NACOG)
Jeronimo Vasquez	Supervisor, Coconino County (MetroPlan)

Others Attending:

Kevin Adam	RTAC
Steve Abraham	CAG
JR Aguilar	YMPO
Brian Babiares	WACOG
Cindy Binkley	NACOG
Cindy Blackmore	Chino Valley
Jason Bottjen	SCMPO
Keith Brekhus	Coconino County
Dedrick Denton	Pinal County
Keith Dennis	SEAGO
Brenda Dickinson	Prescott Valley
Chris Fetzer	NACOG
Crystal Figueroa	YMPO
Vinny Gallegos	CYMPO
Irene Higgs	SCMPO
Kate Morley	MetroPlan
Jenn O'Connor	NACOG
Ace Overmann	Coconino County
Andrea Robles	CAG
Pedro Rodriguez	NACOG
Sandra Tavel	MetroPlan
Maury Thompson	Yavapai County
Desi Zurcher	CYMPO

1. Chairman Paul David called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and asked RTAC Legislative Liaison Kevin Adam to state the names of those that had joined the meeting.

2. Chairman David made a call to the public. No one wished to address the Board.

3. Chairman David called on Mr. Adam to discuss the appointment of San Luis Councilmember Maria Cruz to replace Gary Knight as the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO) representative to the RTAC Board. He stated that he gladly welcomed her nomination as Councilmember Cruz had previously served on the RTAC Board and had been very proactive with the Legislature. He also thought it was a benefit to have a border community represented on the RTAC Board due to all of the economic activity and infrastructure needs at the international ports of entry. He also welcomed Page Mayor Bill Diak to the meeting and announced that Mayor Diak had been nominated to serve as the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) alternate representative and has also been a long-time advocate for rural transportation. He apologized for not placing his appointment on the agenda and indicated it would be an agenda item for the next meeting. Vice Chair Nancy Campbell made a motion seconded by Coconino County Supervisor Jeronimo Vasquez to appoint Councilmember Cruz to the RTAC Board as the YMPO representative which was approved unanimously.

4. Chairman David called for a motion to approve the draft RTAC Board meeting minutes of May 20, 2024. Vice Chair Campbell made a motion seconded by Supervisor Vasquez to approve the minutes as drafted which passed unanimously.

5. Chairman David called on Mr. Adam to provide a legislative report. Mr. Adam stated that the Legislature adjourned on June 15th, passing a \$16.2B FY24-25 budget which required \$1.3B in spending adjustments to address a deficit from FY23-24 and a projected structural deficit for FY24-25. Unlike past years, the Legislature did not target HURF transfers to the State General Fund as a source for balancing the budget. However, transportation was not left unscathed as roughly \$290M in State General Fund revenues that had been earmarked for specific transportation projects in earlier years' budgets but had yet to be spent, was redirected back to the General Fund to help address the upcoming year's deficit. Of that \$290M, the Legislature pledged to restore \$166M specifically for SR-347 improvements and the widening of I-10 in the West Valley in future years. He stated that while this commitment was better than just eliminating the funding, it would be up to future legislators whether or not they decide to restore the funding when they vote on those future years' budgets. He indicated that some of the redirected funding was the result of project cost savings but that most would impact project scopes or timing. He specifically pointed out the roughly \$70M in previously appropriated funding that was taken back from ADOT for statewide pavement rehabilitation as a major hit to Greater Arizona. He stated that some projects received additional funding in the budget as there was roughly \$20M in supplemental appropriations included for various projects across the State.

Also of importance to transportation was the passage of HB2438 on the last day of session which continues ADOT for another eight years and without earlier proposed restrictions on ADOT operations and activities that could have potentially impacted ADOT's ability to secure all of the federal transportation dollars available to the State.

He also mentioned HB2318 which was enacted earlier in the session, makes some reforms to the SMART Fund. Adjournment set the effective date for these reforms as September 14th. This includes a standardization of eligibility between the SMART Fund and federal competitive grant programs so that tribal nations, COG/MPOs and rural regional transit organization will become eligible for the SMART Fund. Safeguards on the appropriate and timely use of the funding were also enacted. The legislation also provides ADOT with the authority to periodically rebalance the remaining funding as there has been drastically differing levels of demand amongst the five applicant categories. The first rebalancing is authorized in January.

He stated that the deficit was very problematic for the RTAC priority project legislation as with any other effort to seek additional state funding. He reminded the Board that they had set the direction to

reintroduce the bill next year and that the COG/MPOs were in the process of reviewing and potentially updating their use of their funding allocations and that the projects to be included in next year's bill should be ready for discussion with legislators at the Rural Transportation Summit in October. He mentioned that if the funding outlook changed, RTAC would be prepared to pursue funding for these projects as well as additional funding for the SMART Fund.

He stated that the next RTAC Board meeting would be on July 22 and that it was planned to be in person and include a robust discussion on next year's legislative agenda as well as a longer term strategy on increasing transportation revenues. The members of the State Transportation Board would be invited to take part in that discussion.

6. Chairman David called on Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization (CYMPO) Director Vinny Gallegos to provide an update on the Rural Transportation Summit which CYMPO will be hosting in Prescott on October 16-18. He stated that all legislators had been invited and that seven had already responded affirmatively. He indicated that he might need help from the Board with RSVP's from their legislators. He mentioned that at the last State Transportation Board meeting, the Board members discussed the need to do something to address the level of under-investment in the infrastructure and that he wanted that discussion to occur at the Summit between the Board, legislators and local-elected officials and staff. He introduced Desi Zurcher from CYMPO who would be the main point of contact for Summit-related needs and questions. He stated that he would be sending out to the Board next week a form to nominate individuals as transportation champions to receive awards which would be named after Gary Knight. He stated that a draft agenda was still under development and would include separate tracks for tribal transportation and transit. He also stated that the agenda would include an invitation only lunch on the first day predominantly for legislators and local-elected officials. Summit registration was open, 50 have registered with an expectation of 400. On sponsorships, he indicated that levels were good but he would like to continue to improve the revenue as costs have gone up dramatically. He indicated that ADOT, AGC and APS had all agreed to be \$10,000 sponsors.

7. Chairman David called on CYMPO Director Gallegos to provide an update from the RTAC Advisory Committee. He indicated that the work of the Advisory Committee had been predominantly covered with the previous discussions on the Summit and priority project legislation. He stated that the directors were also still developing and considering the viability of conducting a long-range statewide transportation needs assessment and thanked Sierra Vista MPO Director Karen Lamberton for her efforts in developing an assessment thru existing available resources.

8. Chairman David asked the Board to consider convening an executive session to perform the liaison's annual performance review. The Board opted to conduct the review during the regular meeting. NACOG Director Chris Fetzer indicated that clarity on some goals would be pursued with Mr. Adam in the near future. He stated that NACOG was considering a 2.35% COLA increase for its employees and that the RTAC budget had the capacity for a similar increase. Supervisor Vazquez recommended a 2.5% salary increase which was approved unanimously.

9. Chairman David adjourned the meeting.