

# YMPO EXECUTIVE BOARD DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 24, 2025
3:30 P.M.

The Meeting will be held In-Person and/or using GoToMeeting by Video and/or Teleconference from the Main Conference Room at the YMPO Offices at 230 West Morrison Street, Yuma, Arizona 85364

## 1. <u>Call to Order and the Pledge of Allegiance</u>.

The Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO) Chairwoman, City of San Luis Councilmember, Maria Cecilia Cruz, called the YMPO Executive Board (the Board) meeting to order at 3:35 p.m., and asked Ms. Ortega to lead, and the Board to join her, in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Roll Call Attendance and Declaration of Votes.

The YMPO Accountant II/Executive Assistant, Lulu Lopez, called the roll as follows:

## YMPO Executive Board Members Present:

Chairwoman	Maria Cecilia Cruz, Councilmember, City of San Luis ^
Vice-Chair	Wynnie Ortega, Councilmember, Cocopah Indian Tribe ^
Member	Cecilia McCollough, Councilmember, Town of Wellton ~
Member	Darren Simmons, Board of Supervisors, Yuma County ^
Member	Arturo Morales, Councilmember, City of Yuma ^
Member	Sam Elters, Arizona State Transportation Board, ADOT ~
Member	Karen Watts, Councilmember, City of Yuma ^

<sup>^</sup> Attended in person.

~ Participated by teleconference.

As of the six constituent member agencies who were present, the quorum requirement was met.

## YMPO Executive Board Members Absent

Secretary/Treasurer Luis Galindo, Councilmember, City of Somerton \*

Member Martin Porchas, Board of Supervisors, Yuma County \*

Member Carol Smith, Deputy Mayor, City of Yuma #

# Not present, but was represented by proxy by another member, or attendee.

<sup>\*</sup> Not present, and not represented by proxy by another member, or attendee.

## Other Attendees Present:

Iqbal Hossain, Deputy Director ADOT

### YMPO Staff Present:

Crystal Figueroa Executive Director

Fernando Villegas Senior Transportation Planner

Jesus Aguilar, Jr Mobility Manager

Lourdes Lopez Accountant II/Executive Assistant
Jeffery Heinrichs IT Manager/Associate Planner

Lucia Zamudio Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper

### Declaration of Votes

Councilmember Art Morales declared he would exercise all 5 votes for the City of Yuma.

At 3:37 PM, Councilmember Arturo Morales informed the Board that he would be present for only the initial 20 minutes of the meeting. He inquired about the potential impact of his early departure on the five votes he had just declared on behalf of the City of Yuma.

In response, Ms. Figueroa stated that, given the absence of other City of Yuma representatives, the Board would proceed by addressing action items first to ensure that the City's votes were appropriately represented during Mr. Morales's attendance.

## 3. Title VI Declaration and Call to the Public.

The Chairwoman called on Jesus Aguilar, Jr., YMPO Mobility Manager, who read the YMPO Title VI obligations.

No members of the public were present to address the Board.

## 4. Consent Agenda.

- A. Approval of February 27, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of Postpone March 27, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes to April 3, 2025
- C. YMPO Income/Expenditure Report for March 2025.

MOTION: Mr. Morales moved to approve both items of the consent agenda as presented. Supervisor Simmons seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Figueroa addressed the Board, stating that although Mr. Morales would be departing the meeting early, a quorum would remain present. Therefore, the

meeting would proceed according to the original agenda, without the need to prioritize action items.

## 5. ADOT Tentative FY 2026-2030 Facilities Construction Program

Ms. Figueroa introduced Mr. Iqbal Hossain, Deputy Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), who provided an overview of ADOT's Tentative 2026–2030 Five-Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program. The program, released on March 3, 2025, outlines a \$12.7 billion investment plan for transportation infrastructure across Arizona, including projects funded in District 6. Mr. Hossain highlighted key initiatives aimed at pavement preservation, highway expansion, and safety enhancements. He also noted that the public comment period for the tentative program will remain open until 5:00 p.m. on May 23, 2025. Stakeholders are encouraged to submit feedback through various channels, including online forms, email, phone, mail, or by attending the State Transportation Board's public hearing scheduled for May 16, 2025.

Ms. Figueroa inquired about the underlying causes of the funding gap in the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) Tentative 2026–2030 Five-Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program. In response, Deputy Director Iqbal Hossain explained that the funding shortfall is primarily due to the discrepancy between projected transportation needs and available revenues. Specifically, while the program outlines \$12.7 billion in planned investments, the long-term projections indicate that funding needs will exceed \$231 billion through 2050, highlighting a significant gap. This gap underscores the importance of strategic allocation of limited resources and the necessity for additional funding sources to meet the state's transportation infrastructure demands.

Mr. Morales inquired whether the increasing prevalence of electric vehicles (EVs), which do not contribute to gas tax revenues, necessitates policy changes such as raising the gas tax or implementing alternative taxation methods for EVs to address funding gaps. Mr. Hossain responded that while EV owners currently pay registration fees, they do not contribute to fuel tax revenues. He noted that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is actively collaborating with the legislature and the State Transportation Board to explore various options for generating additional transportation revenue, including evaluating practices adopted by other states. However, no final decisions have been made at this time. Mr. Morales then inquired whether the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) possesses regional or project-specific data illustrating the \$231 billion in projected transportation needs, to better understand the geographic distribution of these requirements.

Mr. Hossain responded that while the Long-Range Transportation Plan evaluates the statewide system as a whole, specific regional breakdowns are

not detailed in the current presentation. He acknowledged the value of such information and indicated that ADOT can provide more detailed regional data upon request.

Mr. Elters then addressed the Board and emphasized the severity of Arizona's transportation funding shortfall, highlighting that the gap between available revenue and statewide infrastructure needs has reached a critical level. He noted that addressing this issue will require a multifaceted approach, including potential increases to the gas tax, implementation of taxes on electric and hybrid vehicles, and indexing the gas tax to inflation. He stressed that relying on a single solution would be insufficient given the magnitude of the funding challenges. Additionally, Mr. Elters referenced the Long-Range Transportation Plan, indicating that by 2029 or 2030, all available transportation revenue is projected to be allocated solely to system preservation, leaving minimal funds for expansion projects. He also pointed out a significant shift in the composition of the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF), where the Vehicle License Tax (VLT) has surpassed the gas tax as the largest contributor which is a change attributed to the gas tax remaining unchanged for over 30 years. He concluded by underscoring the importance of statewide collaboration, involving all regions and districts, to address these pressing transportation funding issues.

It was at this time that Chairwoman Cruz announced the arrival of Councilmember Karen Watts from the City of Yuma at 3:37 p.m. Subsequently, Mr. Morales inquired about the appropriate procedure to transfer his proxy votes to Councilmember Watts, as he needed to depart from the meeting. He proposed a motion to formally assign his voting authority to Councilmember Watts for the remainder of the meeting.

Chairwoman Cruz inquired about a previous presentation she attended at the onset of her council tenure, wherein Arizona's road conditions were assigned a letter grade of 'D'. She questioned whether this assessment originated from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and if a similar evaluation would be conducted in the future. Mr. Iqbal Hossain, Deputy Director at ADOT, sought clarification on the grading reference. Chairwoman Cruz explained that the grade was analogous to academic grading, intended to simplify understanding. Mr. Hossain confirmed that ADOT conducts presentations on pavement conditions and noted that most of Arizona's bridges are in very good condition, with approximately 98–99% rated as such. He acknowledged that while interstate highways are generally in good condition, some local roads are in poor condition. Overall, the system's health is good but declining due to revenue constraints, leading to a gradual deterioration from good to fair and poor conditions.

Chairwoman Cruz then invited Mr. Sam Elters, a member of the Arizona State Transportation Board, to comment. Mr. Elters clarified that the 'D' grade likely

originated from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Arizona Chapter's Infrastructure Report Card. He noted that in recent years, the ASCE downgraded Arizona's infrastructure grade from a C or C- to a D, encompassing all transportation segments, including state highways and local networks. The grading considers both the condition of the infrastructure and the available revenue to meet needs. Mr. Elters emphasized that this assessment underscores the importance of collaborative efforts across all regions and districts to address the state's infrastructure challenges.

## 6. FY 2025 Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) Opportunity

Mr. Heinrichs provided an overview of the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP), a competitive grant initiative aimed at addressing deficiencies in community infrastructure supporting military installations. He highlighted that in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, YMPO, in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), secured approximately \$13 million DCIP grant. This funding facilitated safety enhancements on U.S. Highway 95 (US 95) between Yuma and YPG. In FY 2024, YMPO submitted another DCIP application for \$15 million targeting further improvements on US 95. Despite positive feedback, the proposal was not selected for funding. YMPO Looking ahead to FY 2025, YMPO plans to apply for a \$10 million DCIP grant to construct a roundabout at the intersection of US 95 and Imperial Dam Road. This project aims to enhance safety and support military infrastructure. Preliminary steps include drafting the proposal and securing the endorsement from YPG Commander Colonel John Nelson and grant support by the ADOT executive grant team. Mr. Heinrichs noted that the current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY 2024-2025 includes a transportation equity line item, previously approved by the Executive Board, to allocate local funds for discretionary grant opportunities supporting regional projects like the proposed US 95 improvements.

Councilmember Karen Watts inquired about the necessity of the proposed roundabout. Mr. Heinrichs explained that the current T-intersection lacks dedicated turn lanes, posing safety concerns, and that a roundabout would facilitate continuous traffic movement while reducing collision points.

Chairwoman Cruz questioned the cost, to which Mr. Heinrichs responded that the roundabout's estimated \$10 million cost aligns with DCIP grant parameters and is part of a broader corridor improvement plan.

Mr. Figueroa mentioned that \$33 million in state appropriations are allocated for the US 95 corridor, including the Imperial Dam and Aberdeen Road roundabouts. She emphasized that the DCIP grant would supplement this funding, allowing for reallocation of state funds to other corridor segments.

Supervisor Simmons expressed concerns about the suitability of roundabouts for heavy military equipment and the potential for increased accidents, citing local roundabouts that have posed challenges for drivers, especially winter visitors.

Ms. Figueroa acknowledged these concerns and stated that ADOT's District 6 Administrator, Paul Patane, is aware of them. She emphasized that the design is approximately 95% complete, but feedback would still be relayed.

Mr. Heinrichs explained that during previous discussions with ADOT, it was identified that the overall project was significantly underfunded, leaving a substantial funding gap. In exploring various funding opportunities, the DCIP grant surfaced as a viable option. He noted that several segments of the Highway 95 improvement project were considered for the grant application, including potential widening or an intersection such as Martino's Steak Road. Ultimately, the selected project segment aligned with the \$10 million funding threshold set by the DCIP grant, making it the most suitable candidate for submission. Mr. Heinrichs clarified that the decision was not made because the DCIP grant was specifically tied to this particular project segment, but rather because it matched the scope and funding criteria for the grant application.

Mr. Sam Elters, a civil engineer and member of the Arizona State Transportation Board, noted that roundabouts are effective in certain contexts, citing successful implementations on highways like US 93 and SR 179. He recommended obtaining input from the district engineer before making a final decision.

Supervisor Simmons asked if there is a record of accidents at the intersections in question. Staff suggested this may be addressed by the ADOT Southwest District Administrator, Mr. Paul Patane.

Mr. Elters stated he does not have the data on hand but noted that ADOT collects traffic counts and a previous report may contain the information. He added that Mr. Patane likely has access to the records or can obtain them.

Ms. Watts asked staff if there was time to consult about this before making a final decision to move forward with pursuing the DCIP grant application.

Ms. Figueroa responded that, at present, the Department of Defense has not released the official notice of funding opportunity. Although the website indicated the notice would be posted by the end of April, it has yet to be issued. She assured the Board that if the notice becomes available by the first or second week of May, a special meeting could be convened to revisit the discussion and address any questions. She added that efforts are underway to coordinate with Colonel Nelson and that his input, as well as possible participation in future discussions, is part of the plan. Ms. Figueroa emphasized that this meeting was an initial step, and YMPO

has already been in communication with YPG staff. One requirement in the process is to obtain a letter of support from Colonel Nelson and a grant coordination request to ADOT, without these, the YMPO would not proceed. Ms. Figueroa also ensured that concerns would be addressed prior to introducing item back to the Board.

MOTION: Supervisor Simmons moved to postpone the decision on pursuing the DCIP grant application until further input is received from ADOT leadership, Councilmember Watts seconded, the motion was unanimously approved.

7. FY 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #22
Mr. Villegas reported that YMPO submitted eight Highway Safety Improvement
Program (HSIP) applications last year, and six of those were selected for scoping
in the current year. He clarified that scoping does not guarantee full funding, but
ADOT will be reviewing these six projects, which may lead to additional funding
awards.

The scoping phase currently totals \$37,000. Of the six projects, five are located within the City of Yuma and one within Yuma County. This TIP amendment incorporates all six projects into the current fiscal year's TIP.

For the City of Yuma, the projects include three traffic signal improvements and one street crossing enhancement. The Yuma County project involves sidewalk improvements along 44th Street from 12½ E to Columbia Avenue, spanning approximately 1.5 miles.

Mr. Villegas then presented the second part of the amendment, which pertains to a City of Yuma project. The City requested a change to the project name and scope. Originally planned to include three pedestrian hybrid beacon installations, the project has been scaled back to two locations due to cost increases. The revised project now includes:

- 32nd Street and Michigan Avenue (Avenue 63/4 E)
- Avenue C at Center Drain (north of Centennial Lane near Cibola High School)

Mr. Villegas noted that this project is scheduled for construction within the current year, making the amendment time sensitive. If selected, the remaining five HSIP projects are in the scoping phase, with potential construction targeted for FY 2027.

MOTION: Ms. Watts moved to approve the amendment as presented, Supervisor Simmons seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## 8. Transportation Alternatives (TA) Call for Projects

Mr. Heinrichs briefed the Board on opening the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program application period, announced by ADOT on March 24, 2025. The TA Program, established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides \$17 million in FY 2026 for Greater Arizona. Eligible projects include multimodal facilities, safe routes to schools, and environmental mitigation, among others. Letters of support from MPOs are required for application submissions. YMPO has received support requests from Yuma County, the City of San Luis, and the City of Yuma.

MOTION: Supervisor Simmons moved to authorize the Executive Director to execute forthcoming TA letters of support as requested; Ms. Watts seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

## 9. FY 2026 and 2027 YMPO Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Ms. Crystal Figueroa gave a presentation on the draft FY 2026–2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) purpose and other activities. On April 2, 2025, the draft UPWP was formally presented to federal and state partners for review and comment; the cooperation included participation of the Yuma County Public Transit Authority Executive Director, Shelly Kreger. The UPWP outlines planning priorities, defined tasks, and associated budgets for the next two fiscal years, serving as the basis for requesting federal funds and managing YMPO operations.

Key highlights from the presentation included current program accomplishments ongoing and upcoming planning studies, estimated carry-forward balances, federal and local funding sources, and in-kind contributions. Ms. Figueroa noted completed and major activities to include the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Complete Streets Study, and federal the Safety Applications. She also summarized previous accomplishments such as successful audits, cost savings on traffic count vehicle purchases, and implementation of YMPO's updated mission, vision, and branding. Proposed activities for FY 2026–2027 include facility improvements, continued staff development, upgraded equipment and furnishings, contracted financial services, and a proposed staff pay adjustments.

Ms. Lourdes Lopez pointed out two typographical errors the item description: the date listed as April 2, 2023 on Page 3 should be corrected to April 2, 2025, and the fiscal year reference FY 2023–24 on Page 4 should be updated to FY 2026–27. Ms. Figueroa confirmed these corrections will be made.

No action was taken; item was presented for information and discussion only. Final approval of the UPWP is anticipated at the May Executive Board meeting.

## 10. FY 2025 Title VI Training & Guidance

YMPO Mobility Manager JR Aguilar provided the annual Title VI training/presentation to Executive Board members, emphasizing the agency's

responsibility to ensure equitable access to transportation programs and planning activities as a recipient of federal funds. He detailed that Title VI compliance prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, requiring YMPO to guarantee that all services, programs, and activities are accessible and equitable. He continued by stating that in order to meet the needs of individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), YMPO implements bilingual notices in English and Spanish, conducts targeted public outreach, and uses a four-factor analysis to determine appropriate language services on a project-by-project basis. Public participation is a cornerstone of Title VI compliance, and YMPO engages the community through inclusive strategies such as YCIPTA bus ads, community forums, partnerships with senior centers and tribal organizations, and multilingual outreach.

Demographic data from the American Community Survey was presented which informs equitable planning efforts across the region, ensuring that urban, rural, and tribal populations are all considered.

Mr. Aguilar also reviewed complaint procedures, noting that YMPO provides Title VI complaint forms online in both English and Spanish and is required to notify ADOT of any complaints within 72 hours. No complaints have been reported in recent years. Lastly, he noted that transparency and accessibility are supported by posting Title VI notices in public areas and offering voluntary self-identification cards to help track community demographics and participation.

Mr. Aguilar reinforced the importance of public input in all transportation planning efforts, noting that effective community engagement leads to more responsive and equitable outcomes.

## 11. <u>Summary of Current Events/Board Member Reports/Executive Director's Report & Comments by Other Participants.</u>

This agenda item is an opportunity for members and staff to update the Board regarding recent occurrences, as shown below. If written information is available, it will be included in the attached information summary.

- A. Staff Reports Future Meetings.
- B. TAC Minutes.
- C. Conference Updates (AZRTS, and Roads and Streets).
- D. MPO/COG Director/Planner Meetings.
- E. Rural Transportation Advocacy Council activities.
- F. Projects Economic Development and Transportation.
- G. Status Report on AZ Smart Fund

## 12. Possible Future Agenda Items

- A. AZ SMART Fund
- B. Transportation Alternatives Program
- C. FY 2026 and 2027 YMPO Unified Planning Work Program
- D. 2025 Transportation Policy Summit

## 13. Progress Report

Members and staff will update the Board on the progress of ongoing projects and other recent events:

- a. Mar 3 YMPO CSCS Monthly Check-In (CF, FV, JH)
- b. Mar 3 YMPO LRTP Update PMT Meetings (FV, JH)
- c. Mar 3-8 CTAA Leadership Academy D.C (JR)
- d. Mar 4 COG/MPO Planners Meeting (CF, FV, JH)
- e. Mar 5 Zamudio, Lucia New Hire Orientation (LL)
- f. Mar 5 Evaluation Meeting RFQ-25-156 SS4A (FV, CF)
- g. Mar 6 YMPO PL/PLSATO FFY25 ADOT Ledger Review with Katherin Koster (CF, LL)
- h. Mar 6 Arizona Transportation Policy Summit (CF)
- i. Mar 6 Review Preliminary FY26 Entity Dues (CF, LL)
- j. Mar 6 Yuma TMP Bi-Weekly Check-in (FV, JH)
- k. Mar 7 ADOT and COG/MPO Finance Workshop (CF, FV, LL)
- I. Mar 10 ADOT/YMPO Coordination Meeting (CF, FV, JH)
- m. Mar 10 YMPO Staff Meeting (All)
- n. Mar 10 Regional Mobility Committee (JR)
- o. Mar 11 Yuma TMP/YMPO LRTP Coordination Meeting (FV, JH, CF)
- p. Mar 11 YABC COY Open Enrollment changes (CF, LL, LZ)
- q. Mar 13 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (CF, FV, JR, LL)
- r. Mar 13 YMPO LRTP TWG Meeting (FV, CF, JH)
- s. Mar 17 CTS Meeting (CF, FV)
- t. Mar 17 RTAC Advisory Committee Meeting (CF)
- u. Mar 18 YMPO LRTP Update (CF, FV, JH)
- v. Mar 18 Yuma PM10 Update Meeting (CF, FV)
- w. Mar 19 Transportation Alternatives TAC Meeting (CF, JH)
- x. Mar 20 STB YPG Tour (CF, FV, JR, LZ)
- y. Mar 20 Yuma TMP Bi-Weekly Check In (FV, JH)
- z. Mar 21 STB COY & YMPO Breakfast (CF, FV, JR)
- aa. Mar 24 YCIPTA Board Meeting (JH)
- bb. Mar 26 ADOT Redesignation of CFC (CF, FV)
- cc. Mar 27 YMPO LRTP TWG Meeting (CF, FV, JH)
- dd. Mar 27 YMPO Executive Board Meeting (CF, FV, JH, JR, LL, LZ)
- ee. Apr 1 YMPO LRTP Update PMT Meetings (CF, FV, JH)
- ff. Apr 2 PPAC Meeting (CF)
- gg. Apr 2 FY26 AZ CDS Introductory Webinar (FV)
- hh. Apr 3 Yuma TMP Bi-Weekly Check-In (FV, JH)

- ii. Apr 7- YMPO CSCS 0 Monthly Check-In Meeting (CF, FV, JH)
- ij. Apr 7 YMPO Presentation to Yuma County Supervisors (CF)
- kk. Apr 7 Traffic Count BKM Meeting (JH)
- II. Apr 9 Yuma Resource Guide Advisory Committee Meeting (JR)
- mm. Apr 10 TAC Meeting (CF, VF, JH)
- nn. Apr 10 MPO/COG Directors Meeting (CF)
- oo. Apr 14-16 AzTa 38th Annual Conference (CF, JR, JH, LZ, FV)
- pp. Apr 14 ADOT/YMPO Coordination Meeting (JH, FV, CF)
- qg. Apr 15 SYMPO Quickbooks Review/Questions for YMPO Acct (LL)
- rr. Apr 15 Yuma MPO LRTP Update Meeting (FV, CF, JH)
- ss. Apr 15 Yuma PM10 SIP Update Meeting (CF, FV)
- tt. Apr 17 Arizona Incoming Planner Information Meeting (JH, JR, FV)
- uu. Apr 17 Yuma TMP Bi-Weekly Check-In (JH, FV)
- vv. Apr 17 Mobility Manager Meeting with First Things First (JR)
- ww. Apr 18 Arizona State Transportation Board Meeting (CF)
- xx. Apr 21 YMPO Presentation to Yuma County Board of Supervisors (CF)
- yy. Apr 21 RTAC Advisory Committee Meeting (CF)
- zz. Apr 21 AZ Transportation Policy Summit Next Steps Meeting (CF)
- aaa. Apr 22 JLUP Working Group (CF)
- bbb. Apr 23 YC Email Etiquette Training (LZ)
- ccc. Apr 24 APA Conference Virtual (FV)
- ddd. Apr 24 YMPO Executive Board Meeting (All)

## 16. Adjournment.

Having no further business to discuss, Chairwoman Cruz adjourned the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

Notice: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, YMPO does not discriminate on the basis of disability, in the admission of, or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, activities, or services. If you have any questions regarding YMPO programs, activities, or services, please contact Crystal Figueroa at 928-783-8911.

## **Anticipated Future 2025 Meetings**

Future meetings will continue at the YMPO office at 230 West Morrison Street, Yuma, Arizona 85364. Members may participate in person, OR they may participate electronically by computer and/or telephone (or both), using the GoToMeeting portal. In general, meetings will be the last Thursday of each month, and the next two meetings are tentatively scheduled for May 29 and June 26, 2025.

Preparation and Approval of Minutes:

Minutes prepared by:

opez Accountant II/Executive

**Assistant** 

Minutes reviewed to form by:

Minutes approved in regular session on May 29, 2025

Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization

Councilmember Wynnie Ortega, Vice-Chair, YMPO Executive Board