



MEETING MINUTES

**Ecosystem Connectivity Mitigation
Advisory Committee
(EMAC)
10:00 AM**

**Monday, April 25, 2022
Training Room
Yavapai County Development Services
1120 Commerce Drive, Prescott**

****This meeting is being held in-person and via Zoom Webinar***

Members of the Public may join the Zoom meeting as an “attendee” by accessing:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TJ3vv8VyS4CYyLui8NKdzg,

or may view the live stream of the meeting on the CYMPO YouTube page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUXH6D19fFNp9wnPVRNoMjPeW8hVlyqg-> or Google “CYMPO YouTube

CYMPO Ecosystem Connectivity Mitigation Advisory Committee

Chair	Tammy DeWitt, City of Prescott
Vice-Chair	Elizabeth Johnston, Arizona Game and Fish
Member	Chuck Budinger, ADOT Northwest District
Member	Francisco Anaya, Prescott National Forest
Member	J. D. Greenberg, Private Citizen
Member	Deb Pastor, Private Citizen
Member	John Pratt
CYMPO Staff Liaison	Lindsay Post
TAC Liaison	Dan Cherry

Mission Statement:

The mission of the EMAC is to study and advocate for the preservation of interconnected eco-systems in the CYMPO Region that will integrate land use and mitigation for natural resource protection, and wildlife habitats into the regional transportation planning and design program.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Johnston and Member Budinger attended the meeting virtually through Zoom Webinar. Member Greenberg arrived at 10:05am. Member Pastor joined virtually at 11:45am. All other members were present.

A reminder to those attending the meeting, please keep your line on mute until you wish to speak.

2. TITLE VI POLICY AND MEETING PROCEDURES

*Allison McCarthy, CYMPO Administrative Assistant
(Task #100)*

CYMPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related Nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Members of the public may review the CYMPO Title VI Plan, and submit a Self-Identification survey by accessing the CYMPO website.

This meeting is available for public viewing on the CYMPO YouTube page.

3. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** This item is to provide an opportunity for presentation of comments by the public on subjects *not on the agenda*. Individuals wishing to address the Board need not request permission in advance and are limited to three (3) minutes.

Instructions for virtual meeting: Those who wish to participate in the CYMPO Executive Board meeting can access the meeting by using the Zoom Webinar link at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TJ3vv8VyS4CYyLui8NKdzg. Since this is a virtual conference meeting everyone will be muted when they call into the meeting. Attendees may type comments in the “Q&A” feature or use the “Raise My Hand” feature to request to make a verbal comment.

Ms. Post read a written comment received by a member of the public.

4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES**

No updates were provided.

5. **CYMPO UPDATES**

*Vincent Gallegos, CYMPO Executive Director
(Task #100)*

- Introduction of Lindsay Post, CYMPO Transportation Planner (EMAC staff liaison)
- Introduction of new EMAC private citizen member, John Pratt
- YouTube Live Stream

Lindsay Post was introduced as the new Transportation Planner for CYMPO, and John Pratt was introduced as the newest private citizen member of the EMAC.

Mr. Gallegos announced that EMAC meetings will no longer be streamed live through YouTube, but may be accessed live through Zoom Webinar.

6. **CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 18, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF THE EMAC**

MOTION

Vice-Chair Johnston motioned to approve the October 18, 2021 Special Meeting minutes of the EMAC. Member Greenberg seconded the motion.

VOTE

Member Pratt abstained. All other votes were unanimously in favor.

7. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE SUNDG CONNECTOR DESIGN CONCEPT REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW PROJECT**

*Vincent Gallegos, CYMPO Executive Director
Lindsay Post, CYMPO Transportation Planner
(Task #200)*

Mr. Gallegos announced that AECOM has been selected as the project consultant for the Sundog Connector Design Concept Report (DCR) and Environmental Overview (EO). Explained that this project is the next appropriate step in line after the already-completed 2013 Corridor Study, and that no funding for construction has yet been identified. Explained that the Sundog Connector has been included in general plans for the past 25 years,

and that the DCR & EO will evaluate the project in greater detail. Explained that development on the west-end of the proposed connector is in process.

Mr. Gallegos noted that the new federal infrastructure bill has made a significant financial commitment for wildlife mitigation and connectivity initiatives. Noted a collective effort is taking place among the City of Prescott, Yavapai County, and the Town of Prescott Valley to purchase a portion of state trust land on Glassford Hill to preserve the land as open space.

Mr. Gallegos explained that once the Sundog Connector DCR & EO is complete, it will be up to the involved agencies to initiate the project design, which could take up to a year to complete. Once project design is complete, the project would be ready to move into construction, pending available funding.

Member Greenberg suggested that the EMAC express support for the preservation of open space on Glassford Hill. Mr. Gallegos suggested the EMAC recommend a resolution to be considered by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Executive Board.

Mr. Bondy was introduced as the Project Manager with AECOM for the Sundog Connector Design Concept Report & Environmental Overview. Explained that AECOM will work with the EMAC to determine potential environmental and wildlife problems on the Sundog Connector, and will identify potential solutions in the proposed alternatives. Mr. Bondy explained that a project TAC will be identified and consulted throughout the project. Also noted that stakeholder meetings will be held to include interested parties in brainstorming activities related to the project.

Mr. Gallegos clarified that a “no build option” would refer to the full extension from the developed west end to the east end in Prescott Valley.

Mr. Montoya, City of Prescott Councilmember, inquired about future public meetings to collect public input. Mr. Gallegos and Mr. Bondy confirmed that there will be several opportunities for the public to be involved. Ms. Bondy explained that public comment will be collected through workshops, open houses, and online platforms.

Ms. Post requested input about various groups that may be interested in contributing to the development of the plan. Member Greenberg suggested reaching out to agencies included on the petition used to form the EMAC.

Joanne Oellers, member of the public and member of the Save the Dells organization, explained that Save the Dells will support CYMPO and the EMAC in providing information to the public.

Mr. Gallegos noted that a kickoff meeting is being planned for the first half of May, and a Stakeholder meeting is planned for late May.

Jeff Gagnon, with Arizona Game and Fish, provided a written comment in the chat function that read “Will the Sundog planning process help inform the first mile and a half that will be planned for the construction? This is one of the most important stretches because of the location of state trust land and it contains drainages that will be suitable for wildlife crossings”. Madam Chair DeWitt explained that the first phase of the west end of the project is already platted, and that the connectors to the portion of state land are already identified. Noted that the in-between sections that will require more focus.

8. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE SR69 URBANIZED CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

Vincent Gallegos, CYMPO Executive Director

Lindsay Post, CYMPO Transportation Planner

(Task #200)

Mr. Gallegos explained that the SR69 Urbanized Corridor Master Plan is the next project in line after the Sundog DCR & EO in CYMPO's Transportation Improvement Program. Explained that the Sundog Connector DCR & EO and the SR69 Urbanized Corridor Master Plan are anticipated to be completed in 18 months, at which time CYMPO will present both projects to local decision makers to determine which corridor to invest the most focus in at that time.

Member Greenberg inquired if SR69 is considered a freight corridor, and if that opens additional funding opportunities. Mr. Gallegos confirmed, yes.

Ms. Post provided a presentation of the SR69 Urbanized Corridor Master Plan project. Mr. Gallegos noted that the project is the very beginning stages of planning.

9. REVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO IDENTIFY AND PURSUE POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Vincent Gallegos, CYMPO Executive Director

Lindsay Post, CYMPO Transportation Planner

(Task #100)

This item was taken as item #10.

Ms. Post proposed looking into unconventional methods for funding opportunities to address wildlife crossings and related mitigations. Noted the potential for sponsorships from local groups. Member Greenberg expressed support for thinking out of the box with regards to funding sources.

Member Budinger suggested that CYMPO explore funding opportunities made available through a new federal bill that has designated funding for wildlife connectivity.

Ms. Post read a comment provided by Mr. Gagnon that read, "A sportsman's group asked me about funding a wildlife crossing if they could put their logo on it. How receptive would ADOT be to that idea?" Ms. Post responded that Public-Private partnerships are a favored method for identifying funding.

Mr. Cherry suggested exploring possibilities for consultants to assist in the grant writing process. Mr. Gallegos explained that federal dollars may be spent on hiring consulting firms to produce project assessments.

Member Pratt inquired if grant writing training can be provided to the EMAC. Mr. Gallegos noted that CYMPO staff will follow up on such training.

Mr. Gallegos explained that staff will need assistance and support from the EMAC in exploring and pursuing available funding opportunities.

10. REVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE PURSUIT OF FUNDING FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA)

Vincent Gallegos, CYMPO Executive Director

Lindsay Post, CYMPO Transportation Planner

(Task #100)

Ms. Post requested support from the EMAC for synthesizing information published regarding the IIJA as it relates to wildlife mitigation. Madam Chair DeWitt volunteered to assist in reviewing the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

Ms. McCarthy read a comment provided by Mr. Gagnon that read, “Also the non-federal match identified for most IIJA grant opportunities before applying”.

Member Budinger notified the EMAC that Arizona Game and Fish came to ADOT with a proposal for a wildlife crossing on SR89, south of Ashfork. Vice-Chair Johnston read a comment provided by Mr. Gagnon that read, “It’s a temporary solution at US89 and will need an overpass eventually when traffic volumes increase in the future. Pronghorns use overpasses and not underpasses.”

11. UPDATE OF STATEWIDE WILDLIFE-VEHICLE MITIGATION PLAN

Chuck Budinger, ADOT Northwest District

This item was taken as item #9.

Member Budinger explained that the Statewide Wildlife-Vehicle Mitigation Plan is complete, and provides ADOT’s recommended methods for evaluating points of conflict and identifying remedies related to wildlife and vehicle collisions.

Ms. Post read comment from Jeff Gagnon that read “Unless I am wrong, it looked like the SR69 Master Plan included the area planned for widening already near Lowes. Can the culvert that we were to late to the table on be revisited in the Master Plan for future efforts? It’s still one of the most important corridors in the area and SR69 is number 3 on the list of the report that Chuck references.”

Mr. Gallegos confirmed yes, evaluation of the culvert will be included in the SR69 Master Plan. Noted that it will be evaluated and prioritized based on the whole findings of the study.

Mr. Gallegos explained that the cost of construction projects has risen at least 20% in the last two years.

12. ADJOURNMENT 12:18PM

CYMPO endeavors to make all public meetings accessible to persons in need of foreign language assistance or with disabilities. However, during these trying times, the accommodations we can provide are limited. Please e-mail Allison.McCarthy@yavapaiaz.gov, 72 hours prior to the meeting to request a reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting.