

April 19, 2011

TO: Members of the MAG Regional Council

FROM: Maureen DeCindis, Transportation Planner III

SUBJECT: REVISED APPROACH FOR MAG DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

On February 17, 2011, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) representatives and MAG staff met to discuss the MAG Design Assistance Program. FHWA representatives expressed concerns that the current program, which allowed designs for bicycle and pedestrian projects to be completed up to 95 percent, had to be changed since the design process went beyond what is allowed under federal guidelines. FHWA further asserted that there was a lack of federal oversight of the design process which at times preceded the environmental work. FHWA affirmed the value of the program but stated that the MAG Design Assistance Program can only support projects through the Scoping Phase (less than 15 percent).

Since the inception of the program in 1996, approximately \$2.5 million has been spent on designs which resulted in \$23.3 million in constructed bicycle and pedestrian projects. MAG staff has revised the Design Assistance program accordingly. The process will remain the same for member agencies but future emphasis will be on scoping projects for design and construction funding through the Arizona Department of Transportation - Transportation Enhancement Funds, the Safe Routes to School program and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program.

The following three projects that were previously approved by the MAG Regional Council on December 8, 2010, have been revised to reflect the change in scope to a Project Assessment as required by FHWA.

El Mirage Multi-use Trail (2 miles)	\$66,192.73
Phoenix Grand Canal (5 crossings)	\$75,000.00
Mesa Porter Parkway (2.2 miles)	\$60,000.00

If you have any questions, please contact me at the MAG offices.