

MEETING MINUTES  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
TRANSIT COMMITTEE

October 14, 2010

Maricopa Association of Governments Office  
302 North First Avenue, Suite 200, Saguaro Room  
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Phoenix: Debbie Cotton, Chair

\*ADOT: Mike Normand

Avondale: Kristen Sexton for Rogene Hill

#Buckeye: Andrea Marquez

Chandler: RJ Zeder

\*El Mirage: Pat Dennis

\*Gilbert: Tami Ryall

Glendale: Cathy Colbath

Goodyear: Cato Esquivel

Maricopa County: Mitch Wagner

Mesa: Mike James

\*Paradise Valley: William Mead

Peoria: Maher Hazine

\*Queen Creek: Wendy Kaserman

Scottsdale: Theresa Huish

\*Surprise: Michael Celaya

Tempe: Jyme Sue McLaren

\*Tolleson: Chris Hagen

Valley Metro Rail: Wulf Grote

Regional Public Transportation Authority:

Carol Ketcherside

\*Members neither present nor represented by proxy. + - Attended by Videoconference  
# - Attended by Audioconference

OTHERS PRESENT

Kevin Wallace, MAG

Marc Pearsall, MAG

Alice Chen, MAG

Monique de los Rios Urban, MAG

DeDe Gaisthea, MAG

Micah Henry, MAG

Jorge Luna, MAG

Eileen Yazzie, MAG

Jenna Goad, Glendale

Jeff Martin, Chandler/Mesa

John Farry, METRO

Holly Hassett, Hexagon

Stephanie Shipp, METRO

Joe Bowar, Phoenix

Ken Kessler, Phoenix

Tom Remes, Phoenix

Robert Yabes, Tempe

Bob Antila, Valley Metro-RPTA

Sharon Joy Kleitsch, The Connecting Partners

Charles Huellmantel, C.H. & A.

Marc Soronson, HDR

Jennifer Pyne, URS

## 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32p.m. by Chair Debbie Cotton. Chair Cotton welcomed everyone in attendance and announced that a quorum was present. She introduced one member of the Transit Committee, Ms. Andrea Marquez who was participating via teleconference. She asked if there were any public comment cards, and there being none, proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

## 2. Approval of Draft August 12, 2010 Minutes

Chair Cotton asked if there were any comments or corrections to the Draft August 12, 2010 meeting minutes. Hearing no comments or corrections to the meeting minutes, Chair Cotton called for a motion to approve both draft meeting minutes. Mr. Mike James moved to approve the motion. Mr. Mitch Wagner seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## 3. Call to the Audience

Chair Cotton stated that she had not received any request to speak cards from the audience and moved onto the next item on the agenda.

## 4. Transit Program Manager's Report

Mr. Kevin Wallace from MAG stated that there was no Transit Program Manager's Report this month. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

## 5. Recommendation to Reappoint Chair and Vice Chair Transit Committee Positions

Chair Cotton introduced Kevin Wallace to brief the committee on the Recommendation to Reappoint Chair and Vice Chair Transit Committee Positions. Mr. Wallace explained that as a part of the MAG Committee Operating Policies and Procedures adopted in 2009 by the Executive Committee, the Chair and Vice Chair positions must be appointed on an annual basis. For technical committees, the Chair and Vice Chair positions serve one-year terms, with possible reappointments for one additional term, for a maximum of two years, by consent of the respective committee.

Mr. Wallace presented a variety of options for the members of the Transit Committee to select from. Members were requested to choose either action: (1) recommend reappointment of the current chair and vice chair to serve a second one-year term, or 2) have the vice chair ascend to the chair position and have a new vice chair appointed by the Regional Council Executive Committee. He then requested a motion or agreement to proceed with the appointments.

Mr. James stated that after reflecting upon the committee over the past year and the quality of the leadership, he believed it would be appropriate to reappoint both the Chair and Vice Chair for another one year term. He complimented the positive efficiencies in the grant coordination efforts under the Chair and Vice Chair and offered a motion to reappoint both the Chair and Vice Chair. Mr. RJ Zeder seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Cotton thanked Mr. Wallace for his presentation and the kind words of the committee asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

## 6. Update on Transit Operations Research and Data Collection

Chair Cotton introduced Mr. Jorge Luna from MAG to present an update on Transit Operations Research and Data Collection.

Mr. Luna thanked the chair and stated that MAG staff had been prompted to engage in transit operations research and data collection by a recent Regional Council action, with the approval of the Draft FY2011-15 TIP and that the programming of preventative maintenance be reviewed and amendments of administrative modifications occur no later than December of 2010. Mr. Luna reported that in order to meet the directives of the Regional Council, staff performed the following research tasks: 1.) Contacted peer region transit systems regarding their distributions of federal funds; and 2.) MAG staff brought together an informal working group of MAG Region transit operators to gather data.

He noted that the first such meeting was held on September 21, 2010 where the group discussed and provided MAG information on ADA transit service funding and tracking, transit data inputs to the National Transit Database(NTD), preventative maintenance expenditures, budgetary concerns, and impacts of funding sources. The informal group of transit operators was expected to meet approximately twice a year to refine and update transit operating costs and assumptions, with the next meeting likely to occur in spring 2011. Mr. Luna added that the information gathered by the informal group of transit operators was intended to support in the development of Transit Prioritization Guidelines, another agenda item discussed by Ms. Eileen Yazzie during the course of the meeting.

Mr. Luna closed by adding that Transit Committee had previously requested that staff begin analyzing peer region transit policies in order to evaluate a variety of transit topics that effect the MAG Region. The evaluation of peer regions policies regarding structured transit parking facilities would be presented at the November Transit Committee meeting.

Chair Cotton thanked Mr. Luna for his presentation and asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

7. Project Change Request to the Federal Fiscal Year 2009 and 2010 Program of Projects

Chair Cotton introduced Ms. Eileen Yazzie from MAG to present an update on Project Change Requests to the Federal Fiscal Year 2009 and 2010 Program of Projects. Ms. Yazzie indicated that she had no formal PowerPoint presentation and invited Committee members to refer to their agenda packets. She noted that there was a one page table in the agenda packets for requests to modify the FY2011-2015 MAG TIP. She mentioned that these projects were all released out of discretionary grants and competitive grants programs, a majority through earmark discretionary programs (2009-2010.)

The last noted item on the list was a State of Good Repair Grant competitive grant application for the City of Phoenix from June 22, 2010 that the Transit Committee had approved with the FY2009 and FY2010 Program of Projects. The Regional Council took action on those changes as well on June 30, 2010, where it was requested that the earmark/high priority projects that were identified in the FY 2010 federal register be included in the FY2011-2015 MAG TIP. Ms. Yazzie noted that Phoenix was successful in receiving this grant and the Federal Register was included in the to reflect that award and further explanation of the Federal Register publication followed. The item was presented for information, discussion and possible action.

Mr. James offered a motion to accept the Project Change Request to the Federal Fiscal Year 2009 and 2010 Program of Projects. Ms. Ketcherside seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Cotton thanked Ms. Yazzie for her presentation and asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

8. Programming 5307 and 5309 - Fixed Rail and Guideway Modernization Funds in FY2010 and 2011

Ms. Yazzie explained that there was a three-part action item on the agenda. The decision was made to split the motions into three due to the complexities and importance of each inter-related issue. She added that if any member agency was uncomfortable with any of the individual motions, but satisfied with other motions, that the Committee would table the questioned items and proceed with the approved items.

Chair Cotton inquired as to if there were any time constraints on any of the individual motions, that the committee should be aware of. Ms. Yazzie explained that items two and three needed to be heard by the Transit Committee and action taken before December 2010. If action was not taken at the October meeting, then the November meeting would be necessary to allow these items to be heard by the Regional Council on December 8th. She added that since much of the information presented dealt specifically with transit operations, that the committee looked to the transit operators in the room for assistance in the discussion.

Ms. Yazzie explained that on June 22, 2010 the Transit Committee approved the FY2010 Program of Projects, and the Regional Council had taken on these changes on June 30, 2010. Since then, the Executive Committee had taken action on September 13, 2010 to remove

\$1,517,999 of FY2010 5309 Fixed Rail and Guideway Modernization (FGM) federal transit funds from two Mesa park-and-ride construction projects. It was suggested to program these funds for preventative maintenance since all other eligible regional priorities from the TLCP are funded in the 2011-2015 TIP as a distribution for preventative maintenance for eligible 5309 activities was needed. She noted that additionally, the MAG Regional Council had taken action on July 28, 2010 and approved the FY2011-2015 MAG TIP, and that the programming of preventive maintenance was to be reviewed for potential amendments/ administrative modifications no later than December 2010. To ensure that the deadline was met, it was suggested to focus on making amendments/ administrative modifications to preventative maintenance for FY2011.

Ms. Yazzie summarized the three topics for information, discussion and possible action.

1) Recommend the amount of total preventative maintenance programmed in FY2011; 2) recommend a preventative maintenance distribution methodology for 5307 funds; 3) recommend a preventative maintenance distribution methodology for 5309 funds, and have the methodologies reviewed and updated annually to coincide with the latest National Transit Database information, and modify/amend the FY2011-2015 MAG TIP appropriately.

Ms. Yazzie also specified that all eligible RTP/TLCP regional priority projects were currently programmed in the FY2011-2015 TIP. It was suggested to program the remaining 5309 funds for preventive maintenance for fixed guideway eligible activities. Specifically, for 5309 FGM Programming Scenarios (examples for Phoenix, RPTA, Metro), the following two options were considered: 1) Combine the 2011 funds and distribute based on recommended formula. Funding in 2012 stays the same. 2.) Combine all funds and distribute evenly between 2011 & 2012. In addition, the recommendation of \$5.8 million for bus purchases needed to advance to 2011.

Chair Cotton asked if there was any discussion on the agenda items before the committee. Discussion followed.

After discussion on the merits of each scenario, the committee recommended the following for each motion:

1.) Recommended the amount of funds for preventative maintenance programmed in FY2011 and FY 2012 is distributed equally as shown in Option #2,

2.) Recommended that the preventative maintenance distribution methodology for 5307 be tabled until the November meeting after MAG staff may present more scenarios.

3.) Recommended Scenario #3 preventative maintenance distribution methodology for \$1,571,999 of FY2010 5309-FGM funds and that it is a non-precedent setting distribution; and modify/amend the FY2011-2015 MAG TIP and the FY2010 Program of Projects appropriately.

Chair Cotton asked if there were any further questions or comments and hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

## 9. Transit Prioritization Guidelines for Federal Funds

Ms. Yazzie explained that currently, the MAG region did not have an approved set of transit prioritization guidelines for programming federal funds. MAG set the priorities for the transit element of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Regional Transportation Planning Authority (RPTA) was tasked to manage the life cycle for the transit element, known as the Transit Life Cycle Program (TLCP). She noted that there was a disconnect in the programming process, which has resulted in about \$30 million of 5307 federal funds in FY2011-2015 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that were programmed to preventative maintenance as a placeholder since the region did not have prioritization guidelines in place to apply in programming the funds.

Ms. Yazzie added that looking specifically at the later years of the TIP, 2012 - 2015, the funding amounted to almost \$18 million. MAG staff had used the framework of previous prioritization guidelines and had created different scenarios that emphasize: transit customers and existing service, transit customers and expansion of service, passenger enhancements, 'Building the Plan:' funding unfunded projects in the RTP, and other support services. She noted that these are emphasis areas were not exhaustive and referred the committee to their packets for additional information. Ms. Yazzie said that the TLCP/RTP priorities and projects with Federal funds resulted in a \$30 million funding gap, with only \$11.7 programmed in FY2011. She added that there were inadequate guidelines in the region to address the programming gap. She mentioned that a scenario to address these inadequacies was to create guidelines establishing a framework with three concepts: 1.) setting priorities and constant priorities (legal requirements), 2.) a transit demand metric system and 3.) Implementation.

Ms. Yazzie explained that the Transit Demand Metric System included a variety of criteria formulas such as: operation, operating expense, vehicle miles/hours/trips, services provided, service hours asset-management, spare ratio, average age of fleet, age/mileage of vehicles to be replaced eliminated back-log maintenance, passenger, ridership, revenue miles/hours/trips, and travel time saved. She added that locally derived revenues included: local match, emission reduction, development patterns and accessibility, auto ownership rates, and expansion versus replacement. Discussion followed.

Chair Cotton asked if there were any further questions or comments and hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

## 10. Tempe South Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

Mr. Wallace explained the Tempe South Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) agenda item, the five components within the recommended motion before the Committee and that it was time sensitive due to the potential freeze in the TIP. He thanked METRO and City of Tempe staff on preparing the information and then introduced Marc Soronson of HDR's, METRO light rail consultant to give an update on the project. Mr. Soronson explained that the MAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) identified future high capacity transit improvements along Rural Road in the City of Tempe. Specifically, he noted, the RTP includes two transit projects within the Tempe South study area: 1) a 2-mile high capacity/light rail transit improvement extending south from downtown Tempe; and 2) a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor on Scottsdale/Rural Road extending from north Scottsdale to Chandler.

He noted that in August 2007, Valley Metro Rail (METRO) initiated a federally sponsored Alternatives Analysis in the Tempe South corridor. Both the 2-mile high capacity/light rail transit project and the BRT projects were analyzed as part of that study, but only the BRT segment south from downtown Tempe was evaluated. Mr. Soronson explained that the AA process culminates in the creation of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), which defines the transit technology and alignments. METRO staff has proposed a modern streetcar along Mill Avenue for the LPA. The study also confirmed the importance of the Rural Road BRT project, between the Tempe Transit Center and the Chandler Fashion Center.

Mr. Soronson explained the details of the Tempe South LPA study, the characteristics of the streetcar option and the BRT option, and discussion followed. He noted that ridership (opening day) for the modern streetcar was estimated at 1,100 to 1,600 per day, but that the number did not include special events. He also noted that the capital budget for the project was \$162 million with \$3.6 million per year for operating and maintenance costs. He followed with an explanation on the Rural Road BRT option. He noted that ridership (opening day) for the Rural Road BRT was estimated at 5,200 to 5,700 per day, but that the number also did not include special events. He added that the capital budget for the project was \$60-65 million with \$3.1 million per year for operating and maintenance costs.

Mr. Soronson mentioned that the Tempe South Study had an extensive public involvement process. Ten public meetings were held over the course of the project with 450 attendees participating. An additional 47 presentations were given to advisory committees, neighborhood associations, civic organizations, and other groups as well project updates via website, e-mail, and the newsletters.

Mr. Soronson then referred the members to their agenda packets, the presentation and informed the Committee that the item was on the agenda in five parts for information, discussion, and recommendation to approve:

- 1) A Locally Preferred Alternative for the Tempe South project, including a modern streetcar on a Mill Avenue alignment with a one-way loop in downtown Tempe;
- 2) Inclusion of a potential future phase of modern streetcar east along Southern Avenue to Rural Road as an Illustrative Transit Corridor in the MAG Regional Transportation Plan;
- 3) Future consideration for increased service levels and capital improvements, per the description provided herein, for Rural Road BRT through the regional transportation system planning process;
- 4) Future consideration for high capacity transit needs north of downtown Tempe along Rio Salado Parkway and south of Southern Avenue along Rural Road to the vicinity of Chandler Boulevard through the regional transportation system planning process; and
- 5) Further consideration of commuter rail along the Tempe Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad, through the regional transportation planning process, and pending results from the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT's) Phoenix-Tucson Intercity Rail Alternatives Analysis.

Ms. Kristen Sexton asked if it was necessary to have the commuter rail portion included within the motion. She further explained that there was concern that this would set a precedent of prioritizing commuter rail on the Tempe-Kyrene Branch ahead of other lines described in the MAG System Study, even though it ranked last in ridership potential of the four corridors modeled.

Mr Wulf Grote responded that over the duration of the Tempe South study there was great interest in from the community in commuter rail on the UP Kyrene Branch and that there was a suggestion that continued study of the option should continue in the future. Mr Wallace added that this line item within the motion would not in any way set a prioritization for implementation of commuter rail on the branchline, but would allow for its continued study.

Mr. Soronson mentioned that the presentation would be further refined and considered for adoption by the Tempe City Council on October 21, 2010. The METRO Board would consider the LPA for acceptance on November 17, 2010, followed by final action by the MAG Regional Council on December 8, 2010.

Chair Cotton requested a roll call vote for the entire five-item motion. The motion passed with seven yeas, three nays and one abstention.

Chair Cotton asked if there were any further questions or comments and hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

#### 11. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair Cotton asked the members of the Transit Committee if there were any issues that they would like added as future agenda items. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

Ms. Ketcherside requested a Quarterly Federal Grant Reports update. Mr. Wallace noted that the updates were already being prepared and that there would be another Quarterly Federal Grant Reports update from City of Phoenix staff before December.

#### 12. Next Meeting Date

Chair Cotton thanked those present for attending the MAG Transit Committee meeting. She announced that the next meeting of the MAG Transit Committee would be held on Tuesday November 9, 2010 at 1:30pm in the Saguaro conference room. There being no further business, Chair Cotton adjourned the meeting at 3:18 p.m.