



## Executive Director's Report

We live in a dynamic and complex region, and there are many important items on our Regional Council agenda to consider. To enable adequate time for discussion of the most complex issues, some items are placed on the MAG Consent Agenda. It is important to note that these items are equally as important, and this month is a perfect example in which an item was approved by consent that will have significant benefits for our region and for our member agencies.

The Regional Community Network is a fiber-optic communications network connecting member agency Traffic Management Centers. These centers serve as the coordination centers for traffic management for many of the larger cities and towns in the region, and efficient management of these centers is significantly enhanced by effective communications between these centers. The ultimate goal is to use the network to connect MAG agencies for the primary purpose of coordinating traffic control operations between neighboring agencies. Once the gaps in the fiber optic infrastructure are closed, the traffic centers will be able to "see" traffic coming into the municipality from neighboring jurisdictions. The first phase of the project is being guided through a joint effort of the MAG Technology Advisory Group and the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Committee. With MAG funding, the project is being implemented by the Arizona Department of Transportation as an ITS project.

The action by the Regional Council at its April meeting was specifically related to streamlining the decision-making process. The reporting structure for the network was approved. This action marks another step forward for a project that represents the true spirit of cooperation among agencies in leveraging existing agency infrastructure investments. At future meetings, the Regional Council will review recommendations regarding the policies and procedures that will guide the operation, maintenance and future expansion of the network to all member agencies. The end result will be improved safety and a reduction in traffic delay and emissions.

This project reminds us that local cooperation is alive and well. We continue to be appreciative of the many technical agency staff members who work behind the scenes to make these important projects a reality.

**For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**

**Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, April 22, 2009****Action Items****Approval of Projects for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funds**

The MAG Regional Council approved the necessary modifications to the FY 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan to allow local projects to move forward under the MAG sub-allocation portion of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. The MAG region receives a total of \$104.6 million for local projects from the \$521 million for highway infrastructure that the state of Arizona received in stimulus funding. The projects approved in April represent approximately \$102 million of the funds. Once projects are identified for the remaining funds, they will be included in a subsequent project change request.

At its March meeting, the Regional Council approved a minimum allocation of \$500,000 to member agencies plus an additional allocation based on population. To date, more than 60 projects have been identified in the MAG region, with the remaining projects expected to be identified soon. Local projects to be funded through the ARRA sub-allocation include:

- 2 Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) ramp projects (\$3.5 million)
- 2 pavement rehabilitation and ADA ramp projects (\$9.46 million)
- 3 bridge projects (\$7.86 million)
- 5 intersection and/or capacity improvement projects (\$7.87 million)
- 10 Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects (\$8.6 million)
- 3 pavement reconstruction projects (\$7.96 million)
- 23 pavement rehabilitation projects (\$47.9 million)
- 5 pedestrian projects (\$7.7 million)
- 3 safety, sign, and landscape projects (\$700,000)
- 3 transit projects (\$1.05 million)

The Regional Council recommended establishing a deadline of November 30, 2009, for projects to be obligated (programmed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration). Funds allocated to local projects that are not obligated by the MAG November deadline would be reprogrammed in the region so that the region can meet the federal obligation date of March 2, 2010, in order for Arizona to be eligible to receive funding from other states that are unable to obligate their funds.

ARRA funds for transportation infrastructure in the MAG region are coming through four main sources: the highway portion, the transit portion, the local portion, and the transportation enhancement portion. On the highway side, the State Transportation Board allocated \$129.4 million of ARRA funds to the MAG region. For transit, in March the MAG Regional Council approved projects to receive the \$66.4 million of stimulus funds for the regional transit portion of the

ARRA funds. Approximately \$15.6 million is allocated to Arizona for Transportation Enhancement (TEA) projects, about \$7.1 million of which is expected to fund 11 projects in the MAG region. The State Transportation Board is expected to take action on enhancement projects in May, with MAG Regional Council action expected in May or June.

**For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Sky Train Link to Airport Approved**

The Regional Council approved an amendment to add the first stage of the automated Phoenix Sky Train project to the MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan for air quality conformity analysis, and to include a second stage as an illustrative project. The Phoenix Sky Train project is a fully-automated, grade-separated transit system that will connect the METRO light rail system to major facilities at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

Phoenix Sky Train will shuttle passengers and employees between METRO and airport terminals, parking facilities and the Rental Car Center. Stage One of the project will consist of three stations: one at 44th and Washington Streets, which will connect the METRO station to the train with a passenger walkway; a station at the East Economy parking lot; and a station at Terminal 4. Stage One is estimated to cost \$562 million and is fully funded by airport sources. The first segment is estimated to be operational by the end of 2013.

Sky Train's Stage Two is currently planned to link the remaining terminals and the Rental Car Center by 2020. Phoenix staff reported that the airport would prefer that the system be completed in one phase, but funding limitations have required a two-phase construction plan. Including the project as an illustrative project will enable the city to apply for a federal credit program called the Transportation Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act of 1998 (TIFIA). TIFIA was established as a federal credit program for eligible transportation projects with a national or regional significance, including transit and rail systems.

**For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Nominating Committee Appointed**

MAG Chair Peggy Neely has appointed the members to serve on the 2009 Nominating Committee. The purpose of the committee is to develop a slate of officers to serve for the FY 2010 fiscal year, which will begin July 1, 2009. MAG Past Chair James Cavanaugh of Goodyear will serve as chair of the committee. Other Nominating Committee members will include Councilmember Dick Esser, Town of Cave Creek; Mayor Boyd Dunn, City of Chandler; President Diane Enos, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; and Mayor Lyn Truitt, City of Surprise. The Nominating Committee will develop a slate of seven candidates. These candidates

shall include a chair, vice chair, treasurer, the past chair, and three members at-large. The election of officers will be held at the June 24, 2009, Regional Council meeting. **For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Funding Approved for Transborder Studies**

The Regional Council approved amending the MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget to include MAG federal funds to have the Arizona State University North American Center for Transborder Studies conduct an external forces and opportunities study. The purpose of the study is to identify global forces and opportunities impacting the three major metropolitan regions in Arizona—MAG, the Pima Association of Governments (PAG), and the Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG)—and how the three regions working together could mutually benefit by encouraging future collaboration in the Sun Corridor. A representative from ASU noted that planning and analysis is necessary to further develop and connect the Sun Corridor, the Intermountain West, and eventually the entire NAFTA corridor. This planning requires a focus not only on infrastructure and transportation needs but also on the creation of jobs and an economic development “cluster.” The work is intended to identify the benefits of collaborative planning and to capture opportunity to make the region more competitive in the world marketplace. MAG will contribute \$8,942 to the study, PAG will contribute \$2,272, and CAAG, \$786.

**For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Next Regional Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, 2009, at 5:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include recommended approval of the FY 2010 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget and the member dues and assessments; a proposal to advance a portion of the Williams Gateway Freeway; Arterial Life Cycle Program Regional Area Road Fund closeout; a progress report on MAG Regional Human Services Summit projects; and a proposed partnership with the Brookings Metropolitan Policy program for Intermountain West institutions; and an update on a Maricopa County clean air initiative. Additional agenda items are pending.

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