



## Executive Director's Report

At our February Regional Council meeting, we reported that we had held a very successful event earlier in the day surrounding the issue of domestic violence. The Regional Plan to End Domestic Violence 2010 Summit drew more than 100 attendees from local governments, law enforcement, justice and nonprofit agencies. They met to discuss the best strategies for addressing the many impacts of domestic violence – not only the impacts to individual victims but to our society as a whole. The event reminded me of our critical role in human services planning.

At MAG we have a number of core missions, including transportation and the environment. But human services is a third emphasis area in which MAG serves as a critical conduit for discussion and coordination. We have the capacity to bring individuals, agencies, and local governments together who might not always be talking to each other, but who are all working toward the same goal of building strong communities by ensuring every person has a safe place within the community. The summit resulted in a number of proposed strategies for the Plan that will bring safety to survivors and justice to abusers.

Among the keynote speakers at the event was former Assistant Attorney General Steve Twist, who has demonstrated a lifetime commitment to victim advocacy. One of the most compelling statements Steve made during his presentation was when he advised, "let your Plan be the voice for victims who have been silenced too long." That phrase has stuck with me as an ongoing reminder of the importance of MAG's work and the vital role we serve in this effort.

Human services have always been an integral component of a strong community, helping individuals bridge the gap between crisis and stability. Keeping people employed, educated and healthy is more economical than providing crisis services. At a time when demand for such services is increasing, funding is being cut, resulting in additional strain on emergency services such as police and fire departments. As a region, we need to carry the message that it is fiscally prudent to continue to invest in human services.

In the meantime, MAG will continue to serve its role of providing coordination, helping the region to leverage resources, and addressing human services regionally to maximize the funding that is available.

Without continued action, the silence Steve Twist spoke of will return, not only in the area of domestic violence, but among all of our most vulnerable populations. **For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**

## **Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, February 24, 2010**

### **Action Items**



#### **Approval of Draft Transit Legislation; Transit Agreement Pending**

The MAG Regional Council voted to approve draft language for a Senate Bill (SB 1416) that seeks to align MAG's federal transit planning roles and responsibilities with state statutes. In reviewing the legislation, the Regional Council also discussed a transit planning agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) that has been under development among MAG, the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA), Valley Metro Rail (METRO), the City of Phoenix, and the transit operators in the MAG region who have representation on the Regional Council. The transit agreement (MOU) discusses transit planning, programming and fund allocation. The MOU also addresses the local role when conducting a Federal Transit Administration Alternatives Analysis.

While the MAG Executive Committee recommended approval of the MOU with minor modifications, the Regional Council elected to wait to vote on the MOU until the agreement was considered by the RPTA and METRO boards at their March meetings. Both boards later approved the MOU. The Regional Council will reconsider the MOU at its next meeting, March 31, 2010.

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

#### **Implementation Status of Committed Measures for PM-10**

The Maricopa region continues to experience challenges in the area of dust pollution. In December 2007, MAG submitted the Five Percent Plan for PM-10 for the Maricopa County Nonattainment Area to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Commitments to implement the measures in the Plan were received from the state, Maricopa County, and 23 local governments in the PM-10 nonattainment area. The Plan includes 53 committed measures that began implementation in 2008.

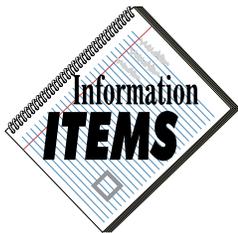
Among the items included in the measures was that each year, MAG would issue a report on the status of the implementation of the committed measures. During the update, it was noted that the Plan submitted by MAG in 2007 demonstrates attainment of the standard in 2010. However, clean data is required at the monitors in 2008, 2009 and 2010 in order to attain the PM-10 standard. Many of the committed measures have already been implemented and exceed the commitments made; for example, the county and local governments paved or stabilized 62 miles of dirt roads in 2008—12 miles more than committed, and paved or stabilized 242 miles of alleys, representing 90 miles more than committed.

The implementation results for 2008 meet or exceed the commitments made to implement the measures in the Five Percent Plan for PM-10. While most measures began implementation in 2008, some will not be fully implemented until 2009 or

2010. The measures need to be implemented as quickly as possible to attain the PM-10 standard by 2010. MAG will continue to track progress to implement the Plan commitments as well as track PM-10 concentrations at the monitors.

The Regional Council voted to forward the 2008 Implementation Status of Committed Measures report to the Governor's office, Legislature, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, and the EPA.

**For more information, please contact Cathy Arthur, Senior Air Quality Policy Manager, (602) 254-6300.**



## **Information Items**

### **Update on Proposed Federal Economic Stimulus Legislation**

In January, the MAG Regional Council approved an amendment to the MAG Fiscal Year 2008-2010 Transportation Improvement Program and Regional Transportation Plan 2007 Update to include a design-build project on the Loop 202 Santan Freeway from I-10 to approximately Gilbert Road, including the ramp connections at I-10 and Loop 101 (\$146 million) and a design-build project for Loop 101 to complete the HOV lanes and other improvements from Tatum Boulevard to the junction with I-10 (\$139.5 million). The projects were added in anticipation of new stimulus legislation known as the "Jobs for Main Street" bill, which includes a provision that 50 percent of funds would have to be under contract in 90 days.

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) advertised the Loop 202 project February 23rd. Staff reported that if there are no stimulus funds from Congress, the project will be able to move forward and be fully funded. Staff is still working to identify funding for the Loop 101 HOV project in case there are no stimulus funds. Staff reported that the bill had passed out of the Senate and was back to the House for amendment.

At the time of the Regional Council meeting, the federal transportation authorization was operating under a continuing resolution, and staff reported that if Congress did not continue the legislation, the federal highway and transit programs could be shut down. Three days later, the U.S. Department of Transportation did in fact face a two-day partial shutdown with thousands of workers temporarily furloughed when the Highway Trust Fund shut down. The House enacted House Resolution (HR) 4691, which provided four-week extensions of several expiring programs, including the Highway Trust Programs. The next shutoff date is now March 28, 2010, unless a compromise bill is passed.

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

### **Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint Requirements**

An update was provided on new fiscal requirements and the status of federal funds rescissions at ADOT.

Federal transportation planning regulations require that the MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Regional Transportation Plan demonstrate that adequate funding is available to build, operate and maintain transportation projects. The Federal Transit Administration is now requesting MAG to concur with grant requests that involve new or expanded service or new capital fixed assets, and to state that sufficient financial resources are available at the regional or local level to operate and maintain the assets for which the grant is being submitted. For the purchase of new buses, or to provide new or expanded service, MAG will have to state that the transit provider has adequate funds available. MAG staff will need to collect and analyze the necessary financial information to make such determinations in the future.

On another financial issue, staff reported on attempts to receive financial information from ADOT to determine the status of remaining federal fund balances. Staff reported that MAG has not received any information of federal fund transactions from October 2008 through the present, but that the ledgers would be coming within a few days. In February, MAG received a letter from ADOT indicating that due to rescissions incorporated into the federal transportation legislation, Arizona lost nearly \$171 million of federal apportionments and that the fiscal year closeout process zeroed out nearly every category of federal funds, including Surface Transportation Program funds. All unused suballocations were also rescinded. Staff reported that if the rescission language being discussed in Congress is not repealed, Arizona could lose in excess of \$200 million in federal funds this year, and the MAG region about \$30-\$35 million.

MAG staff reported this is a serious issue and MAG has been in contact with the state's congressional delegation. In addition, Governor Jan Brewer has sent a letter to the Arizona congressional delegation requesting that they work on this matter. **For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Brookings Intermountain Partnership Report**

In 2009, the Regional Council approved adding \$14,902 in MAG federal funds to the annual budget to participate in the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program Intermountain Partnership. A main purpose of the partnership is to focus on the reauthorization of the federal transportation program, produce research, and help brief local and national leaders. Mark Muro, Fellow and Policy Director for the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, provided an update to the Regional Council on the activities of the institution on behalf of the partnership.

Mr. Muro reported that Brookings worked in the second half of 2009 to insert into national and regional debates the key transportation reform priorities of the Intermountain metropolitan planning organizations and other regional leaders. Using the Brookings report, "Mountain Megs," as a starting point, the

group sought to report on regional trends and perspectives, comment on them, and connect them to federal policy discussions in advance of significant federal transportation legislation

Mr. Muro stated that Brookings produced a major new research paper in fall 2009, generated extensive regional and national media comment, and began to engage in important policy consultation and education—all aimed at conveying to all audiences, including federal policymakers, the need for more extensive federal infrastructure investment, more direct allocation of transportation dollars to metropolitan areas, new finance structures, and more funding for transit investments to support greenhouse gas and energy consumption goals.

One major work product was an analysis of air travel trends in the Intermountain West, the first of its kind to analyze air travel among metropolitan areas (as opposed to individual airports). Mr. Muro stated that the report highlighted that short-haul air travel between Los Angeles and Phoenix, and Los Angeles and Las Vegas, exceeds that on all other routes but one. Mr. Muro commented that this finding received extensive attention in high speed rail discussions, as the paper argued that such traffic points to potential demand for rail and suggests that authorities should consider such air passenger volume when selecting high speed rail investments.

**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, March 31, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include an update on ADOT federal transportation funds for the MAG region; a report on proposed federal economic stimulus legislation and recommended transit allocation, proposed acceptance of the findings of the Regional Transit Framework, recommended approval of a Transit Planning Agreement and discussion of potential legislation. Additional agenda items are pending.

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