



Executive Director's Report

It has been two years since MAG undertook a review of its governance structure to ensure that all voices were being heard in our planning process. That review led to the creation of the Transportation Policy Committee, consisting of business and local government members. Providing more interests a seat at the table resulted in a process that is more reflective of the broader community.

The decision by MAG to overhaul its process wasn't an easy one, but it was the right one – as underscored last month when the entire House of Representatives passed House Bill 2292 by a vote of 60-0. The bill recognizes MAG's planning authority and formally establishes the Transportation Policy Committee as critical to developing the Regional Transportation Plan. The unanimous vote on HB 2292 acknowledges that the current planning system works, and the improvements implemented by MAG have created a more inclusive process.

Although we have made great progress on HB 2292, there is additional work to be done, especially when it comes to adding financial safeguards and oversight provisions to transit projects. These provisions exist for the current freeway program and are considered best management practices. We are also working to address concerns over timing issues to ensure that all of our necessary work can be done in time for the election.

Despite these remaining issues, we are grateful to the business, legislative and elected representatives on the Transportation Policy Committee who so competently articulated their positions on HB 2292 and strove to reach consensus on amendments to the bill. We also thank the House Transportation Committee and the legislature for listening to the debate and recognizing MAG's federally-mandated role in transportation.

The strength of MAG has always been the number of voices that are heard at the table. The fact that the table has grown even larger is a credit to our member agencies' commitment to regionalism. That regional stewardship will continue to serve us in good stead as we look forward to the next 20 years of continued transportation investments in this region.



Regional Council Meeting Report for February 26, 2003

Rubberized Asphalt Schedule Gets Final Council Approval

A final schedule for rubberized asphalt paving has been approved by the MAG Regional Council. In January, the Regional Council committed \$34 million, including \$15.3 million of MAG federal transportation funds, to pay for the quieter pavement resurfacing, contingent upon the final map approval. The Transportation Review Committee recommended the map for the implementation of the rubberized asphalt improvements. The Management Committee concurred with the TRC and further refined the recommendation to include a contingency that if a city could work a trade with another city that would not negatively impact the rest of the system, or if a city could provide alternative funding that would not negatively impact the rest of the system, that would be allowed under the normal material cost changes process.

Studies indicate rubberized asphalt reduces tire noise by three to five decibels. The improvements will begin in earnest this summer on sections of the Santan, Red Mountain, Pima, and Agua Fria freeways. Improvements to a total of 115 miles of freeways will be completed by 2006.

For more information, contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Manager, at (602) 452-5020.

Council Supports Resolution on Reauthorization

With Congress preparing to vote soon on the reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Act, the MAG Regional Council has approved a resolution encouraging the Administration and Congress to support and enact a Reauthorization Bill for Surface Transportation, and set forth six core principles that the Regional Council felt should be included in the reauthorization. The principles include: to maintain the core principles set forth in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21); to protect, maintain and enhance the funding allocation; to maximize funding for transportation needs; to increase and encourage cooperation with and support for local decision makers; to increase flexibility and streamlining throughout the funding program; and to recognize the importance of transportation to homeland security. TEA-21, which authorizes current funding levels for transportation, expires on September 30, 2003.

For more information, contact Tom Remes, Senior Policy Planner, (602) 254-6300.

State Programs Approved for Public Comment

Each year, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) prepares a Life Cycle Program and Five-Year Highway Construction Program for the MAG region. The Life Cycle Program forecasts and allocates funds through the life of a major funding source, and reflects a fiscal balance between revenues and expenditures. The five-year construction program lists state highway projects to be built in the region over a five-year period. Both documents were approved by the Regional Council for the purpose of public review and comment. Although MAG is not going to be updating the MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan this year, once public comment is received and any subsequent program changes made, the ADOT projects will be incorporated in the next update of the TIP and the new Regional Transportation Plan.

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

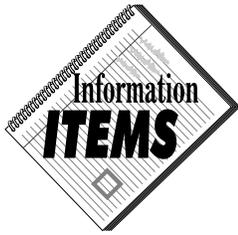
Council Cancels 2003 Desert Peaks Awards Program

The MAG Regional Council voted to suspend the Desert Peaks Awards Program, at least for this year, due to economic constraints.

The Regional Council initiated the Desert Peaks program in 1998 to recognize regional efforts and the cooperation of governments, citizens and the private sector. The awards have been held in conjunction with the MAG Annual Meeting and have helped increase the visibility of projects completed through regional cooperation. However, due to the loss of \$36,000 in available funding, the Council expressed concern over the cost of hosting the event and the ability of cities to participate in the event.

Several Council members mentioned the merits of the program and held open the possibility of continuing the awards program should additional funding sources become available in the future.

For more information, contact Denise McClafferty, MAG Executive Assistant, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

EPA, Truckers Respond to Lawsuit

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the American Trucking Associations, Inc. have filed individual briefs in a lawsuit over the region's particulate plan. The Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest filed the lawsuit in July challenging approval of the MAG Serious Area Particulate Plan for PM-10. The Center claims the plan does not include the most stringent measures possible for combating dust in the region, such as requiring the use of CARB diesel fuel and utilizing the best available control measures for agriculture. In its brief, the EPA maintains that the plan does have the best available control measures and most stringent measures in place for onroad and nonroad engines, and maintains that the plan meets federal requirements without CARB diesel. The EPA also cites arguments that requiring more than one best management practice for each of the three agriculture categories cannot be technologically justified and could cause an unnecessary economic burden.

The American Trucking Associations brief maintains that the plan properly excludes CARB diesel as a most stringent measure. Arguments cited include: cost renders it an infeasible control measure; expected PM-10 reductions would not happen since refueling would likely occur outside the nonattainment area; this area may not be able to receive an adequate supply of CARB diesel fuel to meet requirements; and the measure would have a detrimental impact on interstate and local trucking companies.

If the suit is successful and EPA's approval of the plan is vacated, federal transportation funds could be lost and major transportation projects could be stopped. A court decision is possible in July.

For more information, contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Budget Workshop Held

In an effort to get early input into the FY 2004 Budget and to provide information to member agencies about the proposed budget and work program, MAG held a budget workshop via videoconference on Thursday, February 20, 2003. The workshop included an overview of MAG's estimated FY 2004 revenues and expenses and proposed projects for the FY 2004 Work Program.

The budget includes eight new projects for fiscal year 2004, including a transportation GIS system, an update of the pedestrian design guidelines, an arterial street bottleneck analysis, a freeway simulation project, arterial street traffic counts, partnership with the Texas Transportation Institute, aerial photos, and a database purchase.

The FY 2004 budget shows estimated total revenues of \$15,113,688 and estimated total expenditures of \$14,983,078. The budget represents a decline in revenues of approximately \$218,170 over last year, and a matching decrease of the same amount in proposed expenditures.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Kimbrough, Fiscal Services Manager (602) 254-6300.

Joint Agency Public Hearing Offers Opportunity for Input

On March 6, the public had an opportunity to formally comment on several draft transportation plans at the Joint Agency Transportation Open House and Public Hearing. The joint event gave citizens an opportunity to comment on:

- FY 2004-2008 Tentative Five-Year Construction Program of State Highways, including projects in the MAG region.
- FY 2004-2007 Life Cycle Program for the MAG regional Freeway System.
- FY 2004-2008 Tentative Airport Development Program.
- FY 2002-2006 RPTA/Valley Metro Short Range Transit Report.

Representatives from the Arizona Department of Transportation, MAG, and Valley Metro were on hand to receive public comments and provide information as needed. All comments were recorded by a court reporter and responses to the comments will be provided in the MAG FY 2003 Mid-Phase Input Opportunity Report.

For more information, please contact Jason Stephens Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-5300.

Upcoming Events



Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 26, 2003 at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include an amendment to the FY 2003-2007 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, recommendations to ADOT for the FTA

Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program, a report on the FY 2003 MAG Mid-Phase Public Input Opportunity, a report on a strategy for Transportation Outreach to MAG Member Agencies, as well as updates regarding Air Quality, the Community Emergency Notification System, and the Draft FY 2004 Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget.

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