



February 10, 2011

Mr. Dennis Smith
Executive Director
Maricopa Association of Governments
302 North 1st Avenue, Suite 300
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Dennis
Dear Mr. Smith:

We should all be able to agree that in this depressed economy and the resultant challenging economic times, all our agencies are being asked to do "more with less". In reviewing agenda item 5 of the February 14, 2011 MAG Executive Committee Meeting, we believe your proposal to reduce transit planning funding to RPTA and METRO by \$250,000 and allocate such funding to the Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG) will restrict the ability of our agencies to effectively plan for an improved transit system and does not represent a prudent stewardship of public funds. We ask that you consider and share the following issues with the MAG Executive Committee as they consider MAG's External Planning Agency Relationships:

- RPTA and METRO are separate agencies and the types of planning each agency conducts are considerably different. RPTA focuses most on service planning while METRO focuses most on capital planning. The last thing the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) should do in a down economy is to restrict the ability to plan when opportunities to improve the system present themselves.
- Your assumption that expected staff efficiencies between RPTA and METRO, which are being analyzed, will yield cost savings that translate into less planning requirements is premature. Improved efficiencies do not mean that the number of planning projects (which drive the need for funding) or the transit planning needs of the region decrease. Nor does it mean that less funding is needed from MAG in this important area.
- Many cities and towns have decreased staff during the economic downturn. This has affected RPTA and METRO as their member agencies regularly require additional planning assistance as they no longer have sufficient staff to plan or implement a project. A \$250,000 reduction in planning funds will severely and negatively affect regional transit planning in the MAG region.

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We hope you will consider our thoughts and retain historical funding levels for transit planning to your partner agencies during these difficult times. We also hope that your proposal will be thoroughly vetted through the MAG committee process to enable all our member agencies to consider its impact. We are available to further discuss these issues at your request. Thank you.

Sincerely,



David A. Boggs
Executive Director
RPTA



Stephen R. Banta
Chief Executive Officer
METRO