

May 9, 2011

TO: Members of the MAG Regional Council Executive Committee

FROM: Anubhav Bagley, Information Services Manager

SUBJECT: GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) ASSISTANCE TO MAG MEMBER AGENCIES

MAG staff maintains a number of regional datasets in GIS that are utilized to conduct analysis and mapping. MAG member agencies provide input into the maintenance and review of these datasets through the MAG Population Technical Advisory Committee (POPTAC). The final datasets maintained by MAG are shared with all member agencies. Recently, MAG staff was approached by the Town of Gila Bend to explore the possibility of providing assistance to the Town in developing new GIS datasets, and also for MAG staff to serve as the Town's GIS service center. MAG staff is seeking guidance on whether to pursue providing this assistance and the policy issues that need to be addressed as it relates to this project and potentially other MAG member agencies.

Currently, MAG staff maintains regional GIS datasets on jurisdiction boundaries, existing and future land use, residential completions, major employers, and built space. MAG staff regularly provides assistance to member agencies in conducting analysis and mapping utilizing this data and has frequently conducted special projects as requested. The Town of Gila Bend would like assistance from MAG to develop additional datasets, such as existing infrastructure and zoning, along with providing ongoing support for mapping. The Town has requested MAG to provide a cost estimate through the Maricopa Association of Governments Information Center (MAGIC). Through MAGIC, MAG supplies member agencies and others with value-added information services and technical consulting and provides additional fee-earning alternatives to supplement the resources required to maintain both the information resource and technical expertise.

MAG staff, through MAGIC, has assisted other agencies, both private and public, in analysis and mapping utilizing the data available. In conducting these special projects through MAGIC, it is ensured that the regular MAG projects are not delayed. In the recent past, MAGIC assisted the Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG) in developing GIS datasets similar to the ones maintained at MAG. Knowledge transfer to CAAG was a large component of this task. One option may be to accept ongoing projects from member agencies through MAGIC as long as these additional tasks are completely compensated and have the goal of developing in-house expertise at the member agency.

Since other member agencies may approach MAG to provide long term assistance, it is essential to develop a policy that is fair to all member agencies and also does not delay any MAG projects. MAG staff is seeking guidance from the Executive Committee on whether to pursue providing GIS services above and beyond what is already provided, especially if the service is of a continuous nature.