



Executive Director's Report

Noted comparative psychologist Konrad Lorenz, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, pioneered work on learning theory. In his research, he explained how at certain critical periods we are most receptive to learn, or imprint, new information. MAG has experienced many critical periods, most notably the decision by the Regional Council in 1985 to pursue the one-half cent sales tax for transportation. That decision was the result of frustration over the fact that highway funding was unable to keep up with our region's rapid growth. We have all benefitted from that decision, as well as the Regional Council's leadership in the ensuing years, which has brought us additional success with Proposition 400.

We are now facing a different critical learning period. Our region had never experienced a decline in sales tax growth. The recession brought our region 38 straight months of negative sales tax growth. That is definitely a wake-up call, and it is time to embrace another learning period. With our region facing approximately 52,000 pending or foreclosed homes, the time is now to diversify our economy. The MAG Economic Development Committee is reaching out to our current business community and looking at ways to attract new business. The Committee is also engaged in discussions with the Canadian Business Council. More outreach is needed not only with Canada, but also with Mexico.

At our March Regional Council meeting, we heard an update on our Freight Transportation Framework Study (*see below*). The results of this study are eagerly anticipated, as they could identify viable opportunities for diversifying our regional economy. The need for such diversification was driven home during our 2010 Census update, which showed the concentrations of vacant homes in our region at 227,000 — more than double the 101,500 vacant units in 2005.

Our elected officials have always understood what needs to be done to keep moving forward in this region and have risen to every challenge. Our new economic realities are demanding new strategies, new ways of thinking, and a renewed commitment at all levels to enable our continued prosperity. At MAG, we are embracing this challenge through the work of our Transportation Policy Committee, Economic Development Committee, and Regional Council. We look forward to what I am sure will turn out to be an interesting and successful critical learning period.

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

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, March 30, 2011**Action Items****Council Approves Rail Grant Request**

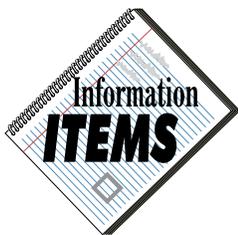
The Regional Council approved a grant request by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to the Federal Railroad Administration for environmental work on the intercity commuter rail corridor from Tucson to Phoenix. ADOT requested \$6.4 million in federal funds with a match amount of \$1.6 million. ADOT approached the entities in the corridor for assistance, including \$500,000 from the MAG commuter rail funds over a three-year period to assist ADOT with the matching funds. The Regional Council approved the request, but in the days following the action, ADOT determined it would not have time to submit the grant application to meet the federal deadline. In addition, the federal rail funding that was to be provided has since been eliminated under the new budget package being considered by Congress.

For more information, please contact Marc Pearsall, MAG Transit Planner, (602) 254-6300.

New TPC Member Named

The Regional Council ratified the appointment of Goodyear Mayor Georgia Lord to fill the unexpired portion of the geographic balance seat on the Transportation Policy Committee. The composition of the TPC includes three members selected from areas that need to be represented to achieve geographic balance, with the members selected from and by the underrepresented geographic area and ratified by the Regional Council. Due to recent elections, a letter of support for Mayor Lord was received to fill the unexpired portion of the seat, a two-year term which will end in June 2012.

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

**Information Items****Freight Transportation Framework Study Update**

The Regional Council received an update on the Freight Transportation Framework Study. The study is being conducted by MAG in conjunction with the Joint Planning Advisory Council, which consists of MAG, the Central Arizona Association of Governments, and the Pima Association of Governments. The goal of the 18-month freight study is to “unite cities, counties, freight entities and businesses to protect, maximize and expand commerce and economic vitality.” The study will identify and develop freight-related economic development opportunities, including the viability of an inland port, and increase mobility and access for freight movements, whether by truck, rail, or air, throughout the Sun Corridor.

For more information, please contact Tim Strow, MAG Transportation Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Update of the MAG Five Percent Plan for PM-10

The Regional Council received an update on ongoing efforts to reduce dust pollution in the Valley, and the need for local governments, business, industry, and Valley residents to unite in their efforts to control dust pollution. On February 14, 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Finding of Failure to Submit a plan due to the withdrawal of the MAG 2007 Five Percent Plan for PM-10. If a new complete plan is not submitted within 18 months of the finding, the Clean Air Act sanction of tighter controls on major industries (two to one offsets) would be imposed by August 14, 2012. If the plan is not submitted within 24 months of the finding, the loss of federal highway funds and the imposition of a federal plan would be imposed by February 14, 2013. The submittal of a new plan and a completeness determination by EPA will stop the sanctions clocks. A plan approval action by EPA will stop the imposition of a federal plan.

It is anticipated that a new plan will be submitted in January 2012 to allow EPA six months to make a completeness determination. The planning effort has been initiated to prepare a new plan. MAG and Maricopa County are working on a new revised 2008 emissions inventory to address the approvability issues identified by EPA.

On a parallel track, MAG is working with its member agencies on activities designed to prevent exceedances from occurring at the monitors. EPA has indicated informally that 2009 may be a clean year. There were no violations of the PM-10 standard in 2010. That means that the next eight months of 2011 are critical in obtaining the three years of clean data necessary to seek attainment of the standard. If the three years can be obtained prior to the submission of the plan, it may be possible for EPA to issue an attainment finding, and Clean Air Act requirements would be suspended as long as the area remains in attainment.

The public is reminded to help control dust pollution by observing the following guidelines:

- Don't drive or park on dirt. If you absolutely can't avoid driving over dirt, drive slowly.
- Avoid using leaf blowers and other equipment that raise a lot of dust. Avoid using gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.
- Reduce fireplace and woodstove use and don't use wood-burning fireplaces on no-burn days.
- Ride ATVs and other off-road vehicles in authorized areas only and never on high pollution advisory days. For authorized places to ride, visit the Arizona Game and Fish website at www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/outdoor_recreation/ohv/atv_brochure.pdf
- Don't burn leaves, trash, or other materials.
- Use propane barbecue grills rather than wood or charcoal.
- Maintain your landscape. Cover loose dirt with vegetation or gravel.

- Report serious offenders to the Maricopa County Air Quality Department at 602-372-2703.
- Disturbing the crust raises dust. Avoid any activities that disturb the naturally-occurring protective layer of crust, especially on high pollution or high-wind days.

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

Update on the 2010 Census

On March 10, 2011, the US Census Bureau released local level 2010 Census population counts for Arizona. The total resident population for Maricopa County as of April 1, 2010, was 3,817,117. The total population for the state of Arizona was 6,392,017.

The Census Bureau has released local-level population and housing counts, as well as summaries on race and other limited demographic data. Data are available down to the size of a neighborhood block for total population, population 18 years of age and over, 63 race categories, ethnicity based on Hispanic/Latino origin, and total housing unit counts by occupied and vacant units.

As a share of the total state population, staff reported that Maricopa County did not record any significant changes as far as the total share of the state population. For the past three decades, approximately 60 percent of the state's population has resided in Maricopa County.

In 2010, three races showed a significant increase in increased their proportion of the population from previous censuses, with Hispanics making up 29.6 percent of the population, Blacks (African Americans) 4.6 percent, and Asians 3.4 percent. White (Not Hispanic) decreased in proportion but still makes up the majority of the region at 58.7 percent.

One surprising finding from the census data came in the concentration of vacant units across the region, with an average of 24.7 vacant housing units per square mile. Overall, the county had a 13.9 percent vacancy rate, representing 227,000 vacant homes, almost double the amount of the 117,000 vacant homes recorded for the region in the 2000 Census and 101,000 vacant units recorded in 2005 by the Special Census. In the 1990 Census, however, when the Valley was experiencing a recession, the vacancy rate was 15 percent.

Staff reported that the July 1, 2010, estimates for the state and county were higher than the actual Census count. For Maricopa County, the estimate was seven percent higher than the April 1, 2010, Census count. These estimates are produced by the State Demographer's Office, which are then approved by the Arizona Department of Economic Security as the official population estimates for the state. Staff noted that MAG is working with the State Demographer's office to review the current

population estimates process and review alternative methods and opportunities for improved data collection. MAG staff will also be working closely through the MAG Population Technical Advisory Committee to review options for a potential mid-decade (2015) population count.

MAG has created a variety of tables, charts and maps displaying the Census 2010 data, which can be found online at MAGcensus.com.

For more information, please contact Jami Garrison, Socioeconomic Research Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, 2011, at 5:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include an update on the Regional Freeway and Highway Program; update on the Five Percent Plan for PM-10; and guidance of the development of the fiscal year (FY) 2012 MAG Unified Work Program and Annual Budget. Additional items are pending.

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