



## Executive Director's Report

At our December Regional Council meeting, I related the story of a Valley domestic violence victim who, after seeing a video produced by MAG, contacted us and was able to immediately get help. It was a gratifying demonstration of how our regional efforts can make a direct difference in residents' lives. This circumstance would not have been possible without the assistance of our member agencies in providing MAG access to your municipal cable channels (Channel 11) and airing our video programming. We want to express our thanks to you for providing MAG with this valuable assistance.

Studies have found that an overwhelming majority of Americans get their news and information through the medium of television over all other forms of media. Through the use of television production equipment and facilities, MAG utilizes its Video Outreach Program to help inform Valley residents of MAG's role and responsibilities in the region and to encourage public participation in the development of MAG plans and programs. Your willingness to help us broadcast these videos allows us to reach the broadest possible community.

While it is not often we have the opportunity to provide such direct assistance as in this most recent case, MAG is dedicated to improving the lives of our residents in many ways, whether it is funding more efficient and safer transportation systems, improving air quality, aiding homeless people, or providing valuable data that informs the planning process. It is especially rewarding when, every now and then, we are able to see the direct results of our efforts. Working together with our member agencies, we can make a difference for our region.

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

## Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, December 7, 2011



### Action Items

#### Approval of MAG Highway Safety Improvement Program Projects

The Regional Council approved a listing of selected projects for road safety improvements that will be implemented in fiscal years 2012 through 2014. Starting in FY 2010, MAG has been receiving a total of \$1 million in federal Highway Safety Improvement Program funds from the Arizona Department of Transportation. A total of 23 project applications were received and reviewed by the Transportation Safety Committee. Projects include pedestrian countdown signals throughout the Valley; street sign upgrades to Clearview font, which is easier to read for elderly drivers; sign inventory management system and sign upgrades; the installation of

changeable speed warning signs; audible traffic signal push buttons; and upgrades to bike lane pavement symbols.

**For more information, please contact Sarah Joshua, MAG Safety Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Approval of Draft Population Updates**

The Regional Council approved the draft July 1, 2011, Maricopa County and Municipality Resident Population Updates. The updates are used to prepare budgets and set expenditure limitations, and were prepared using the 2010 Census as the base and housing unit data supplied as verified by MAG member agencies. Because there may be changes to the Maricopa County control total by the Arizona Department of Administration, the approval is contingent on whether the county control total is within one percent of the final control total. The total July 1, 2011, population of Maricopa County was 3,840,000.

**For more information, please contact Anubhav Bagley, MAG Information Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Information Items**



#### **Salt Lake City/Utah Transit Tour**

The Regional Council received an update on a recent tour of the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) transit system. Approximately 40 elected officials, city managers, transportation policy makers and planners traveled to Salt Lake City in October to gather information and investigate the benefits of the connectivity between bus transit, light rail, and commuter rail.

Staff reported that UTA was selected for the informational tour as a great example of an integrated transit agency that offers daily, multimodal connectivity. Staff noted that although Salt Lake has a smaller regional population than Greater Phoenix, it has surpassed the Valley when it comes to funding transit. Utah implements sales taxes to fund transit, and also utilizes a variety of financing techniques, such as tax increment financing and improvement districts, to augment rail investment.

During the tour, the mayors of eight cities along the line met with the tour participants on light rail and commuter rail to discuss what the transit system has meant for economic development in their own communities. By 2015, UTA will have five light rail lines and two commuter rail lines.

Staff reported that common themes and observations regarding the UTA program included cooperation, economic development through transit oriented development, unique financing and funding options, centralized operations (one transit provider), engineering and technology innovations, linked policies for land use and transportation, and UTA's designation as a real estate broker (allowing it to own land). More information about the UTA system is available online at [www.rideuta.com](http://www.rideuta.com).

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

## **Air Quality Update**

The Regional Council heard an update regarding the MAG Five Percent Plan for PM-10 and the activities to prevent PM-10 exceedances at the monitors and throughout the region. Staff reported that there were additional exceptional events since the last Regional Council meeting, which brings the total of exceedances of the PM-10 standard to 102 in 2011. All but one of these exceedances were due to exceptional events caused by haboobs, dust storms, thunderstorms, and residual dust. Staff reported that it takes an estimated 453 hours of staff time to document one high-wind exceptional event, meaning that work to document the 21 days of exceptional events in the MAG region to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will require 1,189 work days.

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is continuing to prepare the documentation for the 2011 exceptional events with technical assistance from Maricopa County and MAG staff. ADEQ submitted the first group of exceptional events for July 2-8, 2011, to the EPA. Staff reported that the EPA sent back a number of positive suggestions that will be incorporated before the documentation is officially submitted at the end of December.

Staff reported that due to the extensive workload for documenting exceptional events, MAG has been working with legal counsel regarding potential legislative remedies. Draft legislation has been prepared to streamline the process by enabling the states and tribes to determine exceptional events, after consultation with the EPA. The goal is to establish a more reasonable exceptional events process for all of those concerned: EPA, states, tribes, and local governments.

Staff reported that MAG has completed all but one of the chapters in the Five Percent Plan. Information is still forthcoming from ADEQ on items that will be included in that chapter. MAG can demonstrate attainment with the existing measures being implemented and with the new dust action general permit measure, which identifies a series of Best Management Practices for dust generating operations that do not already have a permit to be implemented before and during a day forecast by ADEQ to be at high risk for dust generation.

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

## **MAG Accommodates New Technology**

MAG staff provided a report on the enhancements being made to the agenda process to better accommodate the use of electronic hand-held devices to access meeting materials. Following consultations with member agency staff and the MAG Technology Advisory Group on the best means for making the access of materials more user-friendly, the agenda packets will be posted on the MAG website and FTP site as a single, bookmarked document. Staff noted that any changes to the original

material will be posted as separate documents so as not to lose any annotations that a user has made. Staff reported that the process will apply to all MAG committees. **For more information, please contact Audrey Skidmore, MAG Information Technology Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Update on EDC Activities**

The Regional Council heard an update on the activities of the MAG Economic Development Committee. Staff reported that MAG was working with the City of Nogales, the Arizona Mexico Commission, the Central Arizona Association of Governments and the Pima Association of Governments to coordinate a trip to the Nogales Ports of Entry. The trip took place on December 12, 2011, and more than 50 elected officials, business leaders and state agency representatives participated. Staff is also coordinating a trip to San Luis with MAG elected officials and the mayors of San Luis, Yuma and Somerton to discuss the issues involved in Punta Colonet, such as the Presidential Permitting process and rail crossings. That trip is scheduled for December 20, 2011.

Staff also is continuing to work with the Arizona Commerce Authority, the Arizona Department of Transportation, and the Arizona Aerospace and Defense Commission on a supply chain study for Arizona. The Arizona Commerce Authority is working to develop a database of suppliers that links to a web portal. A working group will develop a scope of work and a request for proposals will be issued for the project.

In addition to the above events, MAG also is working on a Canada-Arizona “meet and greet” with the Canada Arizona Business Council. The event will include elected officials and Canadian business leaders in Arizona who will come together to build relationships and discuss targeted mutual interests. The timing for this event will be in February 2012.

Finally, staff noted that it is working with the Thunderbird School of Global Management to develop a scope of work for a Supply Chain Landscape Analysis that will include a look at Arizona-Mexico “nearshoring,” which, unlike offshoring, involves business conducted with a bordering country, often in the same time zone, so that both parties benefit from their geographic proximity.

**For more information, please contact Denise McClafferty, MAG Management Analyst, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Next Regional Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, January 25, 2012, at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, second floor, Saguaro Room. Agenda items include the Regional Transportation Plan Performance Audit, an update on air quality activities, and an update on economic development efforts, including the Metropolitan Business Planning Initiative. Additional agenda items are pending.