



Executive Director's Report

In recent weeks, a colleague handed me a copy of an old *Arizona Republic* series headlined "The Peirce Report." Dated Sunday, February 8, 1987, it summarizes a report by Neal Peirce, an author and urban affairs expert who was commissioned by the newspaper to examine the "potential and the pitfalls" faced by the Valley of the Sun. Today, 25 years later, it is enlightening to see how far we have come in our region.

The article was written in the late 1980s when the Valley was about to enter a recession. The Peirce report appropriately predicted that the economy faced further threats unless leaders stopped placing all of their faith in "pell-mell, hell-for-leather growth." It noted that Rio Salado was a dry riverbed; the project that would turn 17 miles of the artificially dry river into a regional park was still an idea without funding. Although the freeway system had been funded in 1985, there had been no measurable progress. And Peirce criticized municipalities for not cooperating regionally.

Fast forward to today. The Rio Salado project is a glittering Valley attraction highlighted by Tempe Town Lake. The freeway loop system has substantially been built; 138 miles of freeways that didn't exist in 1987 now make up a state-of-the-art freeway system. Local elected officials have been at the center of this development. The MAG organization serves four million residents—yet its 32 members still can sit around a single table to represent the interests of those residents.

Interestingly, one of the leaders who helped make those changes possible over 22 of those past 25 years was recognized by her colleagues at our December meeting. The Regional Council honored retiring Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs, recognizing her many accomplishments. Through advocates like Mayor Scruggs and so many others at MAG, we have paved the way for a new generation of leaders, who are stepping up to take on new challenges to better compete in a global environment.

Sometimes snapshots of the past give us panoramic visions of the present and help us project the future. The Peirce article helps us recognize the wisdom of looking ahead, and gives us an opportunity to celebrate how far we have already come.

As strategic planner and consultant Michael Gallis mentioned during an address in June, "There are two types of visions: big picture visions or growth state visions. The first can be transformative, while the second leads to incremental improvements." I

am thankful that our elected leaders have the foresight to implement the big picture vision for our future generations.

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

Meeting Report for Wednesday, December 5, 2012

Action Items



Council Approves ITS Strategic Plan

The Regional Council voted unanimously to approve a plan that updates the region's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Strategic Plan, which was previously updated in 2001. The primary purpose of the Plan is to provide guidance for making strategic investments in regional infrastructure that is related to transportation technology on freeway, street and transit systems.

The key changes from the previous plan are the transition from "projects" to "programs" and the introduction of ITS applications for improving safety. Four focus areas were identified: 1) Arterial ITS projects that would improve arterial operations; 2) Projects that would enhance coordination of operations between arterials and freeways; 3) ITS projects that improve road safety; and 4) Projects that would develop local ITS plans. The strategy for implementing the Plan is an interactive process that involves close coordination between the MAG planning process and stakeholders at state and local agencies directly engaged in traffic management operations.

For more information, please contact Sarath Joshua, MAG ITS and Safety Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Council Submits Names for TPC Business Representatives

The MAG Regional Council approved forwarding the names of three potential business representatives to the Speaker of the House of Representatives for consideration for two seats on the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). With the passage of Proposition 400 in 2004, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives were authorized to appoint six business members to the TPC. State law also allows the chair of MAG to submit names to the President and Speaker for consideration. The terms of two TPC business members will expire December 31, 2012. One of the members must represent freight interests, while the other would represent regionwide business. Three names were submitted by Regional Council members for consideration.

The name of Dave Berry, vice president of Swift Transportation—the largest freight company in the United States—was submitted to represent freight interests. Berry

is a charter member of the TPC and has indicated he would be interested in serving another term.

Two names were received for the one regionwide business seat, Karrin Kunasek Taylor, executive vice president of DMB Associates, Inc., who currently holds the seat, and Greg Bielli, regional president of the West Region of Newland Real Estate Group. The Regional Council indicated that all three individuals were qualified and it elected to submit all three names. The Speaker can appoint members based on MAG's recommendations or select his own.

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



Information Items

Solid Waste Best Practices.

The Regional Council received a report on the innovative ways MAG member agencies are addressing some of the challenges associated with solid waste. The MAG Solid Waste Advisory Committee was reconvened in February 2012 after MAG members expressed interest in reconvening the committee to share ideas on best practices.

Staff reported that a total of 31 best practices were submitted. Practices included same day trash and recycling programs, with cities identifying cost savings and route efficiencies with same day pickup. Additional efficiencies with this program have been realized, such as street sweeping, since bins are only out one day per week.

Recycling programs, education and outreach were also identified as best practices. Many programs include informing students on the importance of managing waste through reducing, reusing, and recycling. Some cities have found different ways to divert materials from the landfills, ranging from retrieving gently used items donated to nonprofits to electronic and green waste diversion programs.

One challenging aspect of solid waste is household hazardous waste. Staff reported that several cities identified household hazardous waste collection as best practices. There are also best practices included in the report associated with operations, such as hydraulic leak prevention planning; automatic vehicle location equipment; safety, emergency, and special waste procedures at landfills; landfill gas-to-energy programs that use the methane gas from decomposing trash to generate electricity; and other innovative programs.

Next steps for the Solid Waste Advisory Committee could include producing a recycling video showcasing the MAG member agencies and the programs provided.

The Committee will also be working to obtain regional solid waste management statistics on solid waste facilities and programs, recycling tonnage and acceptable materials, solid waste rates, and diversion rates.

For more information, contact Julie Hoffman, MAG Environmental Planning Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Early Phase Input Opportunity Report

The public is invited and encouraged to provide ideas and input at any meeting throughout the year. However, when MAG updates the Regional Transportation Plan, a specific process is followed that includes opportunities for the public to influence the process in four phases: the early phase, mid-phase, final phase and continuous involvement. The Regional Council received an update on public comments received during the early phase, which represents an opportunity for the public to suggest projects for inclusion in the Plan before they are programmed.

Input received during the early phase included suggestions from the public regarding bike lanes, sidewalks, coordination between bus and rail, a desire for rural routes, and the need for more shelters at bus stops. A full copy of the Early Phase Input Opportunity Report is available on the MAG website at www.azmag.gov.

For more information, please contact Jason Stephens, MAG Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Salt Lake City Multimodal Tour Update

In September, leaders and representatives from the MAG region attended a multimodal transit system tour of the Salt Lake City/Utah Transit Authority (UTA). The purpose of the trip was to gather information regarding the economic and transportation benefits of multimodal connectivity among bus transit, light rail, and commuter rail in UTA's transit system along the Wasatch Front Range and Great Salt Lake.

Staff reported on some of the common themes and observations about UTA. One observation was that it has embraced the visioning process known as "Envision Utah." Cooperative charter agreements have been developed for major projects, and the system helps focus economic growth through transit oriented development. UTA has also developed unique financing and funding options, centralized operations, and incorporated engineering and technology innovation. Policies have been developed that link land use, transit and transportation.

As a transit authority, UTA has the statutory ability to purchase, manage and develop land along the system, enabling it to work with cities to develop specific opportunity corridors depending on the surrounding land use.

Approximately 40 participants from the MAG region participated in the trip, which is the second tour in as many years.

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

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be held on Wednesday, January 30, 2013, at 11:30 a.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, second floor, Saguaro Room. Agenda items are pending.

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