



## Executive Director's Report

A common refrain at MAG is that your strength can become your weakness. We find that this is the case with the regional arterial street network. Built on a one-mile grid system, our arterial network handles 60 percent of the region's daily traffic. While numerous lanes mean our streets can carry a significant amount of traffic, this also creates safety problems for pedestrians and bicyclists trying to cross these wide streets. The Federal Highway Administration identifies the Phoenix region as one of the highest for pedestrian accidents. At our April meeting, we heard about a new safety plan, potential funding shortfalls, and how these issues might be addressed.

In an update regarding the 2015 MAG Strategic Transportation Safety Plan, MAG staff reported that the 10-year implementation plan includes a \$3 million funding shortfall. The MAG region experiences nearly 70 percent of all crashes and 50 percent of all fatal crashes in the state. Eighty percent of the fatal crashes occurred on our arterial street system. In comparison to other urban regions, Phoenix has the second highest fatality rate per 100,000 people, after Houston.

Despite these statistics, we heard of the disparity of the distribution of the federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds to the MAG region, currently at \$1.9 million per year. One of the obstacles in our current process is that safety funding is distributed on an annual basis, making advanced planning to fix safety issues more difficult. A distribution of HSIP funds based on criteria established in the federal transportation law known as MAP-21 would result in a higher allocation to MAG. Such an approach would additionally help the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) meet safety performance goals as required under MAP-21.

Many Arizonans have faced the tragic consequences that result from serious auto accidents. I am confident that working with ADOT, we can come up with a process that can help ADOT meet its performance goals for safety and reduce the number of serious crashes in our region.

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

## Meeting Report for Wednesday, April 22, 2015

### Action Items

#### USDOT "TIGER" Grant Funding

The Regional Council heard an update on the timeline and process for submitting applications for a specific type of discretionary grant funding. In April, the federal



government issued a notice of funding availability for the seventh round of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant funding. A total of \$500 million is available nationwide through a multimodal, merit-based, competitive grant program. There is a set-aside of \$100 million for rural areas, which leaves \$400 million dedicated for projects in urban areas.

Staff reported that the TIGER grant process is an extremely competitive nationwide process with an emphasis on transformative and innovative projects, noting that the U. S. Department of Transportation is more favorable to regionally supported applications. Staff noted that in early rounds of TIGER grants, MAG member agencies submitted their own applications, but they did not fare well. Two years ago, the MAG-supported application for the Phoenix South Central Transit Corridor received a TIGER grant in the amount of \$1.6 million.

MAG member agencies were requested to submit non-transit project suggestions by April 16, 2015. Staff noted the applications would be reviewed at the April 23, 2015, Transportation Review Committee meeting, with recommendations for regionally-supported applications brought back to the Regional Council in May. Pre-applications are due May 4, and individual agencies can submit up to three applications on their own. Final applications are due on June 5, 2015.

**For more information, please contact Nathan Pryor, MAG Government Relations Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **2015 MAG Strategic Transportation Safety Plan**

The Regional Council heard an update on the 2015 MAG Strategic Transportation Safety Plan. The plan is a comprehensive update of the first such plan approved by MAG in 2005. The new plan establishes the regional vision, goals, objectives, strategies, countermeasures and performance measures for making systematic improvements in transportation safety. The Plan was closely coordinated with Arizona's 2014 Strategic Highway Safety Plan that was developed by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT).

As noted in the Executive Director's report above, the MAG region experiences approximately 75,000 crashes each year with 35,000 injuries and 400 deaths, meaning the MAG region experiences nearly 70 percent of all crashes and 50 percent of all fatal crashes in the state. In comparison to other urban regions, Phoenix has the second highest fatality rate per 100,000 people, after Houston.

MAG staff identified six action areas and 47 strategies in four categories: Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Emergency Services. An implementation plan was developed, with an estimated cost of \$7.8 million per year. Identified funding sources equal about \$4.8 million per year, meaning there is a \$3 million gap in funding availability. While the MAG region experiences the vast majority of the crashes

statewide, staff noted that in the current Highway Safety Improvement Program the region receives only about four percent of the allocations. The MAG Regional Council approved a motion directing that MAG staff enter discussions with ADOT to increase the safety funding suballocation to the MAG region by at least an additional \$3 million annually to help implement the strategies identified in the MAG Strategic Safety Plan. The Regional Council recommended that MAG work cooperatively with ADOT in demonstrating how the MAG allocation would assist ADOT in meeting the road safety targets and performance measures established in federal transportation authorization legislation (MAP-21).

**For more information, please contact Sarath Joshua, Senior ITS & Safety Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.**



## **Information Items**

### **Briefing on the City of Phoenix Transportation Plan and Proposed Funding**

The Regional Council was provided an update on an upcoming ballot initiative involving the city of Phoenix Transportation Plan and proposed funding. Mayor Greg Stanton stated that along with mayor and city council elections and other issues, the ballot will include a citywide street and transit improvement plan. Mayor Stanton introduced Phoenix Deputy City Manager Rick Naimark, who stated that a robust city depends on having robust transportation. In 2000, Phoenix voters approved a four-tenths of a cent sales tax, which created a baseline for a good transportation system in the city and includes adding Rapid (commuter) bus service, expanding local bus service, and providing more alternatives for persons with disabilities. It also helped create the light rail system, which has been transformative. Mr. Naimark stated that the updated plan includes extending the current four-tenths cent tax and adding three-tenths of a cent. The updated plan and funding are being proposed because the city of Phoenix will grow and is projected to add population equivalent to the size of Denver in the next 20 years. Mr. Naimark noted that keeping people moving in the city would be difficult if no investments are made. For example, transit service would need to be cut back by about 40 percent if the 2000 sales tax was not extended.

Mr. Naimark stated that street repair resources are shrinking and street maintenance is on a 60-plus year cycle, when the typical life of a street in Phoenix is 30 years. With the proposed transportation plan, Phoenix will be able to repave every major street in the city every 30 years. The plan would provide for improvements to sidewalks and ramps for wheel-reliant residents to ensure ease of accessing buses and light rail.

The proposed plan includes expanding light rail along south on Central Avenue to Baseline Road, west on Interstate 10 to the 79th Avenue park-and-ride lot, west to Grand Canyon University, west to Metrocenter Mall, west to ASU West, and east to Paradise Valley Mall. The plan includes connecting major educational centers and

existing and planned major employment centers. The city is currently studying heavily used routes along 19th Avenue and 35th Avenue as potential bus rapid transit lines. The proposed plan includes new and improved bus service, new and improved Rapid bus service, and new park-and-ride lots.

Mr. Naimark stated that the plan to go before voters was developed through citizen input and recommendations from a 34-member committee. The plan and the tax increase will be considered by Phoenix voters on August 25, 2015.

**For more information, please contact Maria Hyatt, Phoenix Public Transit Director, (602) 534-6765.**

### **Development of the FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget**

The Regional Council received an update on the development of the FY 2016 Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget. Staff reported that MAG's draft FY 2016 budget has been updated for April and is about 65 percent complete. The work program is presented incrementally to the Regional Council beginning in January, with requested approval in May.

The FY 2016 proposed budget is currently estimated at about \$28,741,142, which is approximately \$2.2 million under the FY 2015 budgeted amount. Staff reported that the proposed budget is lower due to lower funding projections for carryforward project work into FY 2016 and a lower estimate for proposed new projects. Staff noted that since the March update, MAG received a new federal highway funding award of \$200,000 for Integrated Corridor Management planning work. Also new is a proposed on-call project for "Cost Risk Analysis for the MAG Regional Freeway and Highway Program." This project is added to assist in identifying contingent funding from current Regional Freeway and Highway Program projects that can be utilized elsewhere in the program.

Staff noted that the budget proposes that a three percent increase be included in the budget for potential salary increases. MAG's evaluations and subsequent salary increases are performance based and the annual performance evaluation is the only potential salary increase in place for MAG staff. MAG has an annual performance review of its employees each June. MAG is proposing the addition of two staff for FY 2016. The Assistant Director position was discussed by the Executive Committee due to the size and responsibility of the MAG organization. The other recommended position is for a Management Analyst I to assist with the MAG Economic Development program and also to assist with Human Resources at MAG. Currently MAG has one staff member supporting all of the Human Resource needs.

Staff reported that the Intermodal Planning Group meeting was held at the MAG offices on March 17, 2015. This is a budget review conducted by the Federal Highway

Administration and the Federal Transit Administration on MAG's proposed budget and compliance. MAG partners attended this meeting and included the Arizona Department of Transportation, city of Phoenix, and Valley Metro. Staff reported that positive comments were received on the MAG proposed budget.

**For more information, please contact Rebecca Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

## **Legislative Update**

Staff provided an update on legislative issues of interest. On the federal level, Congress introduced legislation known as the Intermountain West Corridor Development Act. The legislation, which has bipartisan support, would extend the Interstate 11 designation north to Reno, Nevada, and south from the Wickenburg/Phoenix area to Nogales, Arizona.

The federal surface transportation legislation, MAP-21, expires at the end of May 2015. Staff noted that there are a number of proposals for reauthorization, including the Grow America Act proposed by the Obama administration. It proposes to collect approximately \$2 trillion of untaxed foreign earnings that U. S. companies have accumulated overseas; however, it is a one-time revenue. Staff reported that the legislation includes \$317 billion to the highway system and road safety and approximately \$115 billion to transit.

Another bill discussed is the Bridge to Sustainable Infrastructure Act, which would index the gas and diesel fuel tax for inflation. Staff reported that the legislation could be in effect for 10 years and would be more sustainable in generating funds. The revenue raised is expected to cover the amount transferred annually from the General Fund to the Highway Trust Fund, which usually has an \$8 billion to \$10 billion funding gap each year. Staff noted that there are other proposals regarding raising the federal fuel tax and MAG will continue to monitor developments.

Staff referenced a Transportation for America report on state legislative efforts in 2015 to raise additional transportation revenue, displaying a map of states that were successful in enacting legislation and those that considered legislation. Staff stated that there has been discussion of potential opportunities in the Arizona Legislature for transportation funding next year.

Regarding state legislation of interest to MAG, staff reported that Senate Bill (SB) 1274, ADOT Omnibus, included a provision that proposed transferring the staffing of the Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC) to MAG from ADOT. MAG expressed appreciation to Senator Bob Worsley and Representative Doug Coleman, co-sponsors of the bill, in offering amendments to their bill. Staff expressed appreciation to Representative Tony Rivero for supporting Representative Coleman's amendment

on the House floor and speaking to issues that this bill provision would have created. That amendment succeeded. The bill died when the Legislature adjourned before it could be concurred in the Senate. Staff also thanked the MAG member agencies who worked on this issue.

Staff also provided an update on House Bill (HB) 2617. In the final week of the legislative session, a bill amendment was introduced and approved by the Legislature that will shift some of the cost for funding the Department of Revenue to MAG and the Pima Association of Governments (PAG). HB 2617 would represent a transfer \$2.52 million of the MAG Proposition 400 funds to the Department of Revenue each year, meaning approximately \$27 million in transfers to the Department for the balance of the Prop 400 program. The PAG portion from its 2006 voter approved half cent sales tax is approximately \$500,000 per year.

**For more information, please contact Nathan Pryor, MAG Government Relations Manager, at (602) 254-6300.**

### **Nominating Committee**

The MAG nomination process provides for the chair of the Regional Council to appoint a five-member Nominating Committee. The past chair of the Regional Council, if still a current member of the Council, will serve as committee chair. If the past chair of the Regional Council is not a current member of the Council, the chair also appoints the Nominating Committee chair. In accordance with this process, the following appointments were made: Mayor Tom Schoaf of Litchfield Park, chair; Councilman Dick Esser, Cave Creek; Mayor John Lewis, Gilbert; Mayor Georgia Lord, Goodyear; and Mayor Ken Weise, Avondale.

The Nominating Committee is charged with developing a slate of officers: chair, vice chair, treasurer, the past chair, and three at-large members. If the past chair is not a current member of the Council, the Nominating Committee nominates an additional at-large member. The nomination process requires that the Committee provide a balanced slate of candidates. These nominations are forwarded to all Regional Council members at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting in June.

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

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be Wednesday, May 27, 2015, at 11:30 a.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, second floor, Saguaro Room. Agenda items are expected to include the adoption on the FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget and a legislative update. Additional agenda items are pending.

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