



Executive Director's Report

At the October Regional Council meeting, we received a legislative update. We discussed how we needed to be vigilant in increasing federal funds to this region in the proposed reauthorization of the transportation funding bill being worked on by Congress. In reality, we are advocating going “back to the future” from when the landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was created by Congress in 1991. This legislation recognized the significant role that local governments play in transportation and provided significant responsibilities and funding to regional organizations like MAG.

When ISTEA was signed by President George W. Bush in 1991, it was hailed as the most important transportation bill since President Eisenhower started the Interstate system 35 years earlier. ISTEA was summed up by the media in three words: jobs, jobs, jobs. That is because a key proponent of the bill, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), recognized that local governments are closest to the people. He wanted to increase local flexibility and authority over the national highway system by providing a share of the funding to local governments.

A little known piece of this history has an Arizona connection. Charles Miller, former director of the Arizona Department of Transportation, led a national task force that proposed a program for systems of national importance. The *Keeping America Moving* task force recommended a new National Highway System (NHS) consisting of the Interstate System, selected principal arterial roads, and major transit systems. The key was to focus federal efforts on programs with the highest level of federal interest, such as NHS, while leaving state and local officials to address other highway and public transportation needs.

The concern for the MAG region is the continued loss of federal funding over time with each reauthorization. We continue to see an erosion of funding to the urban areas. This includes a 12 percent decline in funding to the MAG region from the SAFETEA-LU transportation legislation (an earlier version of reauthorization) to MAP-21 (current authorization that is lapsing). The newest Senate reauthorization bill, the Developing a Reliable, Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act, as well as the House version, the Surface Transportation Reform and Reauthorization (STRR) Act, both decrease MAG's Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding—from \$51.6 million each year to \$48.5 million each year.

STP funds are the most flexible type of transportation funds. They have been used in this region recently for light rail extensions, vanpool purchases, arterial street improvements and regional freeways.

There may be hope. Before the DRIVE Act passed, there was a proposed bipartisan amendment (the Wicker-Booker amendment) that would have increased STP funding to urbanized areas. This would have resulted in an increase of about \$10 million each year to the MAG region. Unfortunately, the amendment was never heard. In the House version, two congressional representatives, Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Dina Titus (D-NV), have proposed their own bipartisan amendment. The Davis-Titus amendment would increase the funding to our region to \$57.6 million in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016. The funding would increase over time, to nearly \$70 million by FFY 2021.

This is a rapidly moving and time sensitive issue. We encourage our member agencies to share this information with federal lobbyists or the Arizona congressional delegation as they consider the reauthorization and the amendment.

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

Meeting Report for Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Action Items



Cost Risk Analysis Consultant Selected

The FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget included \$200,000 for the FY 2016 Cost Risk Analysis for the MAG Regional Freeway and Highway Program. In July, MAG issued a Request for Qualifications to create an on-call consulting list for the project. Six firms submitted Statements of Qualifications. A multiagency evaluation team reviewed the submissions and recommended to MAG the selection of HDR and WPS/Parsons Brinckerhoff for the on-call list for the FY 2016 Cost Risk Analysis for the MAG Regional Freeway and Highway Program. The Regional Council approved the selection of HDR and WPS/Parsons Brinckerhoff.

For more information, please contact Chaun Hill, MAG Senior Transportation Engineer, (602) 254-6300.

New Ozone Standard Poses Challenges

The Regional Council received an update on a new ozone standard that will pose challenges for the region. In October, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule to tighten the federal eight-hour ozone standard from 0.075 parts per million to 0.070 parts per million. States are required to submit designation recommendations for nonattainment/attainment to EPA by October 1, 2016. The

EPA anticipates finalizing the designations, classifications, and attainment dates based upon 2014-2016 ozone monitoring data by October 1, 2017.

Staff noted that ozone is created when certain types of emissions chemically react with one another in the presence of sunlight. These emissions include volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxide emissions. Among the major sources of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are biogenics, which include natural vegetation such as plants and trees. The next largest contributor of VOCs is area sources. Area sources include solvents and coatings use, fuel storage and transport, and industrial and chemical processes. The next highest contributors are onroad sources (cars and trucks), followed by nonroad sources. Nonroad sources include construction, lawn and garden, farm and recreational equipment, aircraft and locomotives. Staff added that onroad sources are the largest contributor for nitrogen oxide emissions. Staff noted the new ozone standard is posing a challenge not just for Arizona, but for many other western states as well.

Under the EPA timeline, nonattainment areas would have until 2020 to late 2037 to meet the standard, with attainment dates varying based upon the ozone levels in the area (Marginal-Extreme). In Arizona, nine of the ten counties that monitor for ozone exceed the new standard, including the Maricopa area. According to the EPA, there are existing and proposed federal rules that will provide assistance in meeting the standard, including requirements to reduce the interstate transport of air pollution, regional haze regulations, new emissions and fuel standards, and other changes in standards for air toxics, to name a few. In general, these measures reduce emissions from vehicle exhaust, power plants, and other combustion sources.

The EPA indicates that these rules will help the vast majority of the counties in the U.S. to meet the standard by 2025 without additional action. The Regional Council approved a motion that MAG work cooperatively with the Western Regional Alliance to lessen the impact of the new 2015 ozone standard.

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



Information Items

Reimagine Phoenix

The Regional Council received an update on a Phoenix program, Reimagine Phoenix, that includes a goal to divert 40 percent of waste from the landfill by 2020. A representative from the Phoenix public works department reported that the program changes the current linear system of digging things out of the ground, turning them into temporary products and then discarding them in the landfill. Instead the concept is to create a “circular economy” of diverting waste

from landfills, keeping resources in use for as long as possible, and recovering and regenerating the products and materials at the end.

As part of the initiative, Phoenix is partnering with the Arizona State University Resource Innovation and Solutions Network (RISN) program and other Valley communities on a regional green organics project to better recycle organic waste. The goal is to reduce operating costs, increase revenue and economic opportunities, and give access to capital development that would otherwise be beyond the reach of a single jurisdiction.

In addition, the city is establishing a Resource Innovation Campus. The campus will include a transfer station, recycling facility, composting facility, and room for businesses and manufacturers. As part of the RISN partnership, a technology solutions incubator is being developed. The incubator will provide access to research and expertise from ASU and to feedstock and facility resources from the city of Phoenix. The incubator also will be housed on the Resource Innovation Campus. **For more information, contact Julie Hoffman, MAG Environmental Planning Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

Draft FY 2016 Early Phase Input Opportunity Report

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) conducts a four-phase public involvement process: Early Phase, Mid-Phase, Final Phase and Continuous Involvement. The FY 2016 Early Phase Input Opportunity was conducted from mid-August 2015 to early September 2015 and provided the public with an opportunity to provide project suggestions in areas in which funding was available. These areas included bicycle-pedestrian, intelligent transportation systems, paving of unpaved dirt roads, PM-10 certified street sweepers, Pinal County arterial roadway projects that are in the MAG region, and the regional transit system. All of the project suggestions were forwarded to the appropriate MAG member agency for review and possible inclusion into a draft listing of projects that eventually make up the Draft FY 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). MAG received public comment at the MAG Regional Council during the phase. In addition, MAG also received comment via telephone and online correspondence as a result of a direct mailing to the MAG public involvement mail list and regional libraries.

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

Legislative Update

As noted in the Executive Director's report, staff provided an update on legislative issues of interest, in addition to the update on the transportation reauthorization. Staff began by offering congratulations on two projects in the region receiving grants through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. Nationwide, only 39 projects will receive funds

from the seventh round of TIGER grants. There were more than \$9.8 billion in project applications for the \$500 million available.

The first project is in the city of Phoenix. The Grand Canal Bike and Pedestrian Improvements Project in Phoenix will complete canal trails and add lighting, neighborhood connections, bridges, and signalized crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians on approximately eight miles of the Grand Canalscape. The project will receive \$10.3 million in TIGER funding.

The second project is in the city of Maricopa and was submitted by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) in coordination with Maricopa, the Ak-Chin Indian Community, and MAG. The SR-347 overpass project connects the city with a number of schools, better aligns existing roadways and relocates a passenger train station to a safer location. The project will increase safety and improve mobility at the site, which currently sees approximately 34,000 cars, 168 buses and 60 trains per day at the at-grade crossing.

Staff noted that MAG did submit an application for active traffic management on I-17 and a transit ramp from I-10 to downtown Phoenix, which was not selected for grant funding. However, staff noted that the good news is more transportation dollars are coming to the MAG region.

Staff also reported that a proposed settlement has been agreed to by the school districts, Governor's office and legislative leadership in a five-year lawsuit by school districts against the Arizona Legislature. The agreement increases state land distribution from the current 2.5 percent to 6.9 percent for 10 years. It commits \$50 million for the first five years and then \$75 million the five following years. It has safeguards for the state budget if there is an economic downturn. The settlement would allow the Legislature to stop paying inflation increases if K-12 education ever equals 49 percent of the state general fund. It also allows the Legislature to not pay inflation funding if state sales tax revenue does not increase by two percent in a given year and job growth also stalls. Voters would need to approve the proposal. **For more information, please contact Nathan Pryor, MAG Government Relations Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

Next Meeting

Please note that the next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be in December due to the Thanksgiving holiday. It will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2015, 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.